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civil rights era in north carolina

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JUNIOR HISTORIAN

North Carolina History for Students

Tar Heel Junior Historian Association

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On the cover: Protestors march in May 1963. *Image courtesy of the News and Observer Collection, North Carolina State Archives.* Button *(at right)* produced by UNC-Chapel Hill students R. B. Foushee and N. B. Smith in 1960. *Courtesy of the North Carolina Museum of History.*

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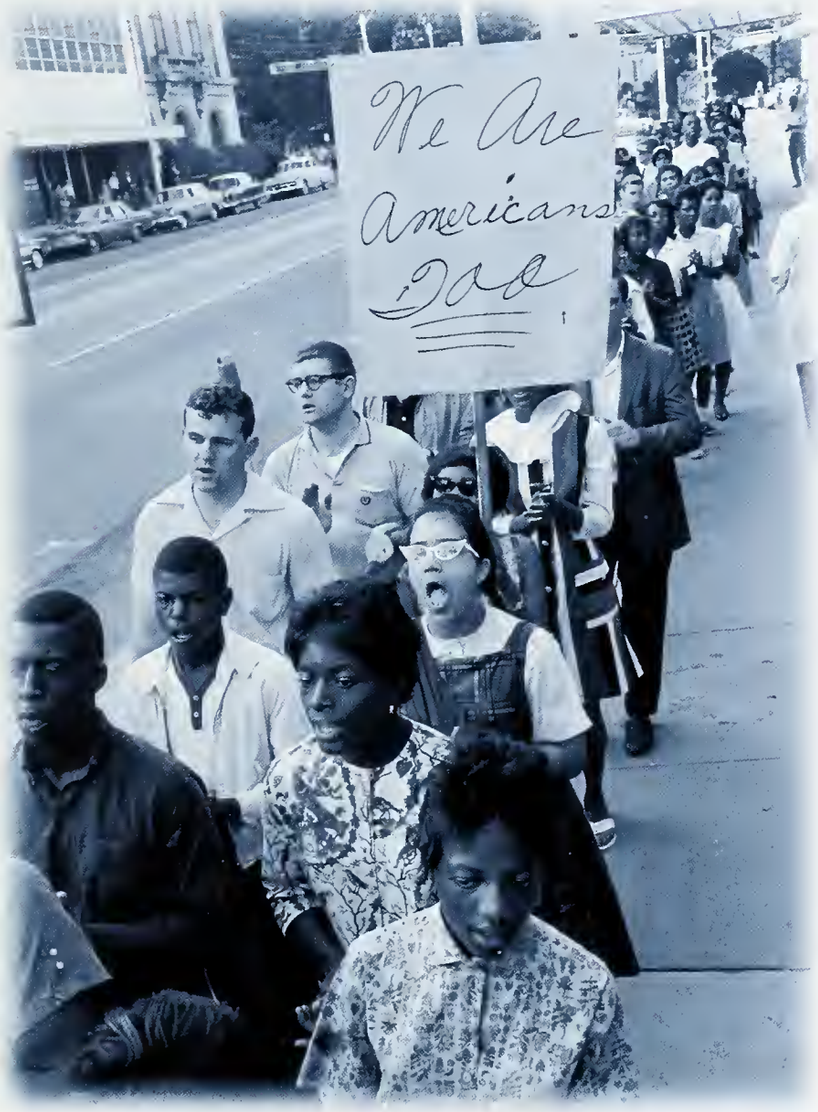
Introduction to the Struggle for Civil Rights in North Carolina

*by Shirl Spicer and Jefferson Currie II**

What qualities of life do you define as "American"? Freedom of speech? Equal rights before the law? Freedom from oppression? Freedom to vote for the candidate of your choice? Citizens in twenty-first-century America enjoy a level of freedom and human rights unknown in many areas of the world. For much of America's past, however, these basic rights were withheld from some residents. Over the course of United States history, women, people without land, and people of color were sometimes denied basic civil and other rights. Although the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments to the United States Constitution ensured basic rights for all Americans, the interpretation of the Constitution over time has excluded many groups from enjoying first-class citizenship.



Protestors march for equality in May 1963. *Image courtesy of the News and Observer Collection, North Carolina State Archives. Time line image of button courtesy of the North Carolina Museum of History.*

Throughout history, North Carolinians have protested unjust treatment by society and the government. In 1835 most African Americans in North Carolina were enslaved. In response to recent slave rebellions in the South, and growing political power among free persons of color, ruling whites changed the state constitution to withhold many basic rights, including the right to vote, from free African Americans and American Indians in an effort to control their actions. Although the Civil War ended slavery, it would take the next one hundred years to correct other injustices.

What was the Civil Rights movement? The modern Civil Rights movement

Civil Rights Time Line (North Carolina)

1830 The General Assembly receives from the governor a copy of *David Walker's Appeal . . . to the Coloured Citizens of the World,* published in Boston the previous year by David Walker, an African American born free in Wilmington in 1785. Appalled by slavery, he advocates open rebellion. The General Assembly bans his writings and other "seditious" works that "might excite insurrection."

The General Assembly enacts "black codes" restricting the activities of free and enslaved African Americans in an effort to prevent slave revolts.

1831 The General Assembly passes legislation forbidding black preachers to speak at gatherings of slaves from different owners, and forbidding anyone to teach slaves to read and write.

1835 The state constitution is extensively revised, with amendments that provide for direct election of the governor and more democratic representation in the legislature. However, new laws take voting rights away from free people of color.

1838 A few hundred North Carolina Cherokee refuse to submit to forced removal. They hide in the mountains and evade federal soldiers. A deal is struck allowing these Cherokee to remain in the state legally. The federal government eventually establishes a reservation for them.

1839 The General Assembly establishes common schools, or free public schools, in the state. The first one opens in Rockingham County the following year.

1840 The General Assembly passes a law prohibiting people of color from owning or carrying weapons without first obtaining a license.

1861 North Carolina lawmakers prohibit any black person from owning or controlling a slave, making it impossible for a free person of color to buy freedom for a family member or friend.

Shirl Spicer and Jefferson Currie II work on the curatorial staff at the North Carolina Museum of History. They are also members of the Civil Rights Exhibit Team and served as the conceptual editors for this issue of THJH.

(from the 1950s through 1970s) was a push by African American, American Indian, and white individuals to change laws and customs that oppressed and separated people because of the color of their skin. But change did not come easily or quickly.

The movement was a massive, grassroots effort led by individuals, communities, churches, businesses, and schools. Participants struggled to ensure that all American citizens were granted their rights as guaranteed in the United States Constitution, regardless of race.

For many people, the words *Civil Rights movement* bring to mind specific images—sit-in protests, large marches, or violent reactions to demands for civil rights. But the movement meant different things to different people. Not everyone protested or marched. Some North Carolinians worked "behind the scenes" in quiet but important ways to make strides for civil rights. Other individuals made active, bold statements in their communities; still others did nothing. And some people fought to stop the movement.

As you read the articles in this issue, look for more details about the struggle for racial equality. Hear firsthand accounts of individual experiences during the Civil Rights era. Discover the names of some of the lesser-known people who pushed for change. And while you read, consider how you would have responded to injustice then, and how you might respond to it now.

Listen to one North Carolinian's summary of the Civil Rights movement. Theodosia Simpson says, "No, the civil rights movement wasn't just a bunch of kindly things done by the federal government. . . . It was a lot of struggle[s] in communities . . . that were hard-fought and took a lot of dedication and strength by the people." After you finish reading this issue of the magazine, consider how *you* would define the movement.

No, the civil rights movement wasn't just a bunch of kindly things done by the federal government. . . . It was a lot of struggle[s] in communities . . . that were hard-fought and took a lot of dedication and strength by the people.

—Theodosia Simpson

A young man protesting segregation, ca. 1962. Courtesy of Andrew Small

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African American Civil Rights in North Carolina

*by Dr. Flora Bryant Brown**

African Americans in North Carolina have fought for equality since their earliest arrival in the state. They have protested quietly and publicly as individuals, in groups, and through organizations. The fight for civil rights developed locally and later became part of the national struggle for equality.

Before the Civil War, free blacks fought for equality when they purchased themselves and loved ones from slave owners, as well as when they purchased property and lived self-sufficient lives, working and raising their families. Free blacks of means reached for equality when they voted. Enslaved blacks struggled for equality when they formed their own community within slave housing and developed their own identity separate from that created for them by the slave owner. They also participated in open forms of resistance, such as running away, destroying crops, and joining in slave rebellions.

Freedmen discuss their political rights at a convention shortly after the Civil War. Time line image of Federal troops liberating enslaved people ca. 1860s.

The Reconstruction period (1865–1877) witnessed the affirmation on paper of the rights of African Americans, many of them newly freed from slavery in the South. Three amendments to the United States Constitution declared their rights as American citizens. The Thirteenth Amendment (1865) abolished slavery and involuntary servitude. The Fourteenth Amendment (1868) recognized blacks as citizens and outlined basic rights. The Fifteenth Amendment (1870) granted African American men the right to vote. When they gained the right to vote, African American men voted Republican, which was the party of Abraham Lincoln (the president who had freed the slaves in the Confederate states). These amendments, along with several United States Supreme Court decisions, gave African Americans legal ground on which to stand in fighting for their civil rights. But even as their rights were affirmed, African Americans faced increasing restrictions on their movements and actions, and limitations were placed on opportunities for them.

During Reconstruction and through the end of the nineteenth century, African American men were elected to numerous North Carolina offices. They served on local school boards, as sheriffs, as magistrates, and as representatives to the state legislature. In addition, they were appointed to a number of political posts. Four were elected to the United States House of Representatives. George H. White was the last African American to serve in the House of Representatives (1898–1901) in this period.

When white Democrats, who generally opposed equal rights for nonwhites, gained control of the North Carolina

1861 North Carolina secedes from the Union on May 20.

1861–65 Approximately 42,000 North Carolinians lose their lives in the Civil War. Many slaves leave their plantations and seek refuge behind Northern lines in Federal-occupied areas of the state, and some join the Union army. A large number of Cherokee in western North Carolina support the Confederacy. The well-known fighting unit Thomas's Legion has two Cherokee companies. The Lumbee in eastern North Carolina are forced to work on Confederate fortifications near Wilmington. Many flee and form groups to resist impressment by the army. Henry Berry Lowry leads one such group, which continues to resist white domination long after the war ends.

1865 A state convention votes to repeal the Ordinance of Secession and end slavery. North Carolina ratifies the 13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which officially abolishes slavery.

Freedmen hold a political march in Raleigh to ask for equal rights. Later 106 African American delegates attend the Freedmen's Convention in the capital city.

The Baptist church founds a school in Raleigh to teach theology and biblical interpretation to freedmen. It later begins post-secondary instruction and becomes Shaw University in 1875.

1868 A new state constitution gives all adult males the right to vote and hold office. It requires the General Assembly to "provide for a general and uniform system" of free schools for all children between the ages of six and 21.

North Carolina ratifies the 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which grants citizenship to "all persons born or naturalized in the United States."

North Carolina rejoins the United States.

An election places in office the first African American state legislators: three senators and 17 representatives.

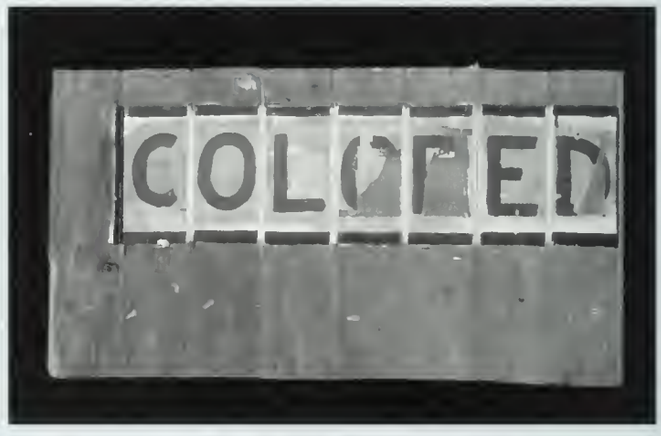
**Dr. Flora Bryant Brown chairs the Department of History and Political Science at Elizabeth City State University in Elizabeth City.*

General Assembly in 1872, African Americans found themselves facing removal from public offices and an end to the progress they had been making in the state. In the 1872 campaign, race was used as a tactic to divide voters. Black men who voted continued to vote Republican. Threats, intimidation, and violence were used to keep them from the polls. Democrats charged that Radical Reconstruction, controlled by Republicans in Congress, had threatened the autonomy of North Carolina. There were allegations that blacks had dominated state government, and that "white supremacy" was necessary in order to protect the interests of whites. In 1875 a state constitutional amendment established separate schools for black and white children.

Blacks reentered politics and elective office when the Populist Party joined with African Americans and Republicans to dominate state government briefly from 1894 to 1898. In North Carolina the combination of Populists and Republicans became known as Fusion. White Fusionists—Populists and Republicans—needed black votes in order to win elections but were not always in support of black officeholding, and they sometimes worked with white Democrats to undermine African American voters.

The reentry of African Americans into politics greatly concerned white Democrats. The Democratic Party used the state election of 1898 to further divide North Carolina on the basis of race in order to regain political power. Furnifold Simmons, chairman of the Democratic Party, ran a racist campaign in the pursuit of power. His tactics worked, and the Democrats regained control of the General Assembly and the governor's office. For African Americans, the outcome of this election was increased racial violence. For example, in the 1898 Wilmington race riot, armed white men burned black businesses and forced a number of African American leaders out of the city. According to records, eleven blacks were killed and twenty-five were wounded, and three white men were killed in the riot.

Next, North Carolina followed the lead of other southern states in passing a series of laws that segregated, or separated, African Americans from whites. The 1896 United States Supreme Court case *Plessy v. Ferguson*, known as the separate-but-equal case, had set the stage for the passage of segregation laws. African Americans were limited first by custom and then by law in where they could live, where their children could go to school, and which public places they could enter and use. Racial etiquette required an intricate array of "dos" and "don'ts," which could differ from one locale to the next. In 1900, North Carolina, modeling the actions of other southern states, passed a suffrage amendment to the state constitution that prevented most African Americans from voting.



These signs tell the story of the society that existed under the Jim Crow system of segregation. [illegible] North Carolina Museum of History.

The foundation of the modern phase of the Civil Rights movement was established in the "Jim Crow" era, which began in 1896 with the separate-but-equal case. Jim Crow was a stereotypical, or caricatured, black man in a song-and-dance show of the time. The term *Jim Crow era* refers to a period in American history in which African Americans were segregated by law regarding where they could live, attend school, and use public places. Blacks fought against segregation and discrimination, and the development of their protests in North Carolina and throughout the South began at the local level.

North Carolina set up a system of segregated education that ranged from elementary school through the university level. African Americans,

many of whom were poor, understood that a better life was built on a foundation of better education. They also understood that segregated education helped to maintain a separate society. African Americans started private academies to educate their children and collaborated with private foundations, such as the Rosenwald Fund, to establish schools. There were several schools for undergraduate higher education for African Americans in the state: St. Augustine's College, Shaw University, and the State Normal and Training School for blacks (now Elizabeth City State University), among others. However, no graduate or professional schools for African Americans existed in North Carolina.

Beginning in the 1930s, African Americans fought a series of court cases to win admission to graduate and professional schools at white universities. One of the first cases was brought by Thomas Hocutt (1933), who sought admission to the school of pharmacy at the University of North Carolina. Hocutt's case was lost on a technicality. But the state did agree to allocate money for graduate programs at African American institutions such as the North Carolina College for Negroes (now NCCU) and North Carolina A&T College. Not until the early 1950s did African Americans gain admission to graduate and professional programs at UNC.

A planning session in 1951 for admission to the University of North Carolina law school. *(Left to right)* Floyd McKissick, J. Kenneth Lee, Harvey Beech, and James Lassiter. *Time line image of Cherokee Indian schoolchildren and woman beside a building. Images courtesy of the North Carolina Museum of History.*

During the Great Depression in the 1930s, African Americans in North Carolina liked what they heard from Democratic president Franklin D. Roosevelt. Because of his New Deal policies (the New Deal was not geared specifically toward blacks, but they were included on a segregated basis), and the actions of the national Republican Party—it had abandoned any fight for equality—blacks began to look to the national Democratic Party as a means to advance the cause of civil rights. African Americans were also reacting to the white backlash against their desires for equality after World War I, and to increasing racial violence by white supremacist groups such as the Ku Klux Klan. By the presidential election of 1936, the majority of African American voters had shifted their vote from the Republican Party to the Democratic Party.

World War II opened a window of opportunity to push the fight for civil rights to a national level. Blacks raised this question: If America could fight to defend democracy in Europe, why couldn't it fight to defend democracy at home? African Americans vowed to fight a "Double V" campaign—victory over totalitarianism abroad, and victory over racism at home. From this point, the pace of the struggle for civil rights quickened, and the national mood was becoming more receptive. The composition of the United States Supreme Court had shifted from conservative to liberal under Franklin D. Roosevelt. After World War II, America assumed a greater role in foreign affairs. That international role, combined with technological improvements in broadcasting, such as the invention of television; a growing African American middle class; and a national civil rights organization (the NAACP—National Association for the Advancement of Colored People), gave African Americans greater tools with which to fight for civil rights.

1868 The U.S. government recognizes the Eastern Band of Cherokee.

1869 North Carolina ratifies the 15th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which gives all men the right to vote.

The General Assembly attempts to revitalize the public schools by reorganizing them and providing $100,000 in funding.

James Walker Hood, an African American minister and an assistant superintendent in the N.C. Bureau of Education, reports that the state has 257 black schools enrolling 15,657 students.

1870 Under a tribal government, members of the Eastern Band of Cherokee elect a chief and write a constitution.

In the "Kirk-Holden War," Republican governor William W. Holden proclaims Alamance and Caswell Counties in a state of insurrection after the Ku Klux Klan perpetrates acts of violence, including several murders. The governor declares martial law and deploys troops. More than 100 men are arrested. Democrats impeach Holden and remove him from office the next year.

1871 Congress investigates the role of the Ku Klux Klan in North Carolina politics. U.S. soldiers arrest nearly 1,000 men for alleged involvement with the Klan, and 37 are convicted. The investigation helps limit Klan activity in the state for several decades.

1875 Amendments to the state constitution establish separate public schools for black and white children and forbid marriage between African Americans and whites.

1877 The General Assembly authorizes the first state-supported institution of higher learning for African Americans in North Carolina. The Howard School, which opened in 1867 in Fayetteville, is chosen as this teacher training facility and is renamed the State Colored Normal School. It eventually becomes Fayetteville State University.

1879 Charles N. Hunter and his brother form the N.C. Industrial Associa-

Civil rights leaders also used a tactic called nonviolent civil disobedience to work for change. In the 1930s African American ministers boycotted a ceremony to dedicate the War Memorial Auditorium in Raleigh (because they had to sit in the balcony), and African Americans in Greensboro carried out a boycott of local theaters (to protest the absence of racially balanced movies). Kelly Miller Alexander Sr. reorganized the Charlotte chapter of the NAACP in 1940 and then worked to build the organization throughout the state. Also during the 1940s, the NAACP assisted in organizing boycotts to protest inferior segregated education. Students from the North Carolina College for Negroes picketed in the state capital to demand improvements at the school.

A March 13, 1966, civil rights demonstration. *Image courtesy of the News and Observer Collection, North Carolina State Archives.*

Major civil rights organizations such as the NAACP, SCLC (Southern Christian Leadership Conference), SNCC (Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee), and CORE (Congress of Racial Equality) played an important role in the struggle for civil rights in North Carolina. In 1947 CORE sponsored the Journey of Reconciliation, an interracial bus trip designed to test compliance with *Morgan v. Virginia*, a 1946 United States Supreme Court decision outlawing segregated interstate bus travel. Teams of blacks and whites left Washington, D.C., and traveled on buses through the South, stopping in Durham and Chapel Hill. Riders faced violence on their stop in Chapel Hill and were arrested in Asheville and Durham. The Journey of Reconciliation was the forerunner of the Freedom Rides of 1961. In addition, CORE led demonstrations in Chapel Hill, Durham, Greensboro, and other cities to desegregate public facilities. There were smaller movements in cities such as Wilmington, Edenton, Williamston, and others. Public facilities were finally integrated with the passage of the national Civil Rights Act of 1964.

In 1954 the United States Supreme Court ruled in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas* that segregated public schools were unconstitutional, meaning that the schools must become integrated. But schools in North Carolina desegregated slowly. The Greensboro school system became the first in the state to comply with the *Brown* decision. In 1957 a few African American students were admitted to white public schools in Greensboro, Charlotte, and Winston-Salem. However, these actions did not achieve complete integration. State leaders who opposed integration devised several plans, including the Pearsall Plan, adopted by the General Assembly in 1956 in an attempt to delay desegregation by allowing all parents who opposed integration to use state funds to pay tuition for private schools.

African Americans and their supporters continued to push for desegregation of public schools, however. Community action and court cases eventually helped to desegregate the schools. In *Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education*, a federal court ruled that busing could be used as a tool to help integrate the public schools, and the Supreme Court upheld the ruling in 1971. Yet some African Americans opposed the desegregation of public education, since they feared losing their community schools and jobs. For instance, a yearlong protest took place in Hyde County in response to a plan to close black schools and send African American students to white schools.

Another key occurrence in North Carolina that became a national event and, in the process, helped to propel the Civil Rights movement forward was the Greensboro sit-ins. On February 1, 1960, thousands of college students were brought into the movement when four African American freshmen from North Carolina A&T College in

police officer arrests a protestor at a 1964 demonstration in Chapel Hill. *Courtesy of the News and Observer Collection, North Carolina State Archives. Time line image of the Croatan Normal School in Robeson County, ca. 1890s, courtesy of the North Carolina Museum of History.*

Greensboro entered a downtown Woolworth store, made some purchases, and sat down at the lunch counter and requested service. They were denied service because they were not white, but the students refused to leave. They remained until the store closed, and they returned the next day with more students. The cause gained momentum. Sit-ins quickly spread to major cities across North Carolina and then throughout the South, helping to bring about the desegregation of lunch counters and other public facilities.

Ella J. Baker, a graduate of Shaw University in Raleigh and a field secretary for the NAACP, called a meeting at Shaw University in April 1960. Baker believed that black college students should have their own civil rights organization. She and the students founded the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), and they traveled across the South to work in local communities coordinating civil rights activities to end segregation and discrimination, and registering African Americans to vote.

Golden Frinks, who became a field secretary for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, planned, organized, and led marches primarily in eastern North Carolina that addressed issues such as desegregation of public schools, equal access to city services, integration of public facilities, better housing, and the right to vote.

The Twenty-fourth Amendment to the United States Constitution in 1964 outlawed the poll tax, which was a fee for voting. The amendment, along with the national Voting Rights Act of 1965, led to an increase in the number of African Americans registered to vote and in the election of African Americans to local and statewide offices. Additional legislation passed by Congress in the 1960s helped to remove other legal barriers to equality.

The struggle for civil rights in North Carolina included individuals, church and civic groups, national civil rights organizations, community leaders, and others. The many factions did not always agree on which issues were most important or on the methods to use to achieve their goals. By the late 1960s, a rupture, or break, became evident between the older, more established civil rights organizations and the newer organizations and their younger participants. These divisions would remain. But the actions of all of the organizations eventually spurred civil rights legislation that led to the integration of public facilities in the state.

The removal of legal restrictions in housing and the access of some African Americans to higher-paying jobs have changed the makeup of many traditionally African American residential communities in inner cities. The communities no longer consist of people from all economic levels. The African Americans who could afford to left these inner-city communities. The poor residents who remain do not have important role models who could raise expectations among the young. Although the Civil Rights movement accomplished much, a great deal remains unfinished. Now, new problems exist for a new generation.

tion, which tries to improve the lives of African Americans by emphasizing economic progress rather than political activity. Hunter's Colored Industrial Fair in Raleigh becomes the state's most popular social event for blacks. Hunter later starts the O'Kelly Training School in Wake County in 1910, called by a 1917 Baltimore newspaper the "finest rural training school in the entire South."

1885 North Carolina recognizes the Croatans, now known as the Lumbee, as an American Indian tribe and authorizes separate schools for them.

1887 The Croatan Normal School opens in Robeson County. It eventually becomes Pembroke State College, Pembroke State University, and the University of North Carolina at Pembroke.

1888 Fifty-four Croatan Indians in Robeson County petition the U.S. government for school funds.

1889 The Eastern Band of Cherokee is incorporated under North Carolina law.

African American members of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union break away to form WCTU No. 2, which will have 400 members in 19 chapters by 1891. Like the original group, the new one reports directly to the national organization. North Carolina is the only state to have a black women's temperance union.

1892 The State Colored Normal School at Elizabeth City opens to train African American teachers. It eventually becomes Elizabeth City State University.

Slater Industrial Academy is founded for African Americans. It eventually becomes Winston-Salem State University.

1893 The federal government opens the Cherokee Boarding School.

The state opens the Agricultural and Mechanical College for the Colored Race in Greensboro to teach practical agriculture and mechanical arts and to provide academic and classical instruction. It

With Deliberate Speed: North Carolina and School Desegregation

by Jefferson Currie II

In the 1800s and early 1900s, North Carolina schools were segregated by race, meaning that black, Indian, and white children went to separate schools for their own race. Although the United States Supreme Court (in the 1896 case *Plessy v. Ferguson*) and the North Carolina legislature had declared that separate education must be equal, it usually was not. Many black and Indian students remember during the early 1900s receiving old, outdated textbooks that white students had used for many years. Black and Indian teachers earned salaries that were routinely lower than the ones white teachers received. The system of segregation, of which education was only a part, caused Lumbee Indian Curt Locklear to feel inferior to whites—a feeling that, he said, was something that "you were born with . . . you were reared with." Although this system had existed since the foundation of North Carolina's public education system in the 1800s, the United States Supreme Court in 1954 ruled in *Brown v. Board of Education* that school segregation was unconstitutional and must end.

Before integration occurred, these elementary students attended an all-white school. Image courtesy of the North Carolina Museum of History.

After the Supreme Court ruling, North Carolina had to desegregate its schools. But many white people in the state, as well as some African Americans and American Indians, strongly opposed desegregation. Instead of quickly integrating the schools and educating students of all races together, North Carolina leaders—mostly whites—decided to study the situation and find a way to avoid true integration. In 1954 Governor William B. Umstead created the Governor's Special Advisory Committee on Education to consider the effects of the state's obeying the Supreme Court ruling. The bi-racial (black and white) committee reported to the legislature that desegregation "throughout the state cannot be accomplished and should not be attempted."

Luther Hodges became governor in 1955, and although he opposed desegregation, he ordered a new committee to study the issue, because the

United States Supreme Court had ruled that desegregation must happen "with all deliberate speed." This new committee established the Pearsall Plan, named after the group's chairman, Thomas J. Pearsall. The new Pearsall Plan began a system of local—not state—control, freedom of choice, and vouchers. The freedom-of-choice system allowed students to attend the school they wanted, and the voucher system allowed parents to use state money to support their child's education in a private school. In effect, the Pearsall Plan did little to integrate North Carolina's public schools. With a few exceptions, such as in Greensboro's schools, most schools in North Carolina remained segregated.

Within the system of segregation, members of the Haliwa-Saponi Indian community had struggled for many years to establish a school for their children. The Indian students had no school to attend, because in Halifax and Warren Counties, where the Haliwa-Saponi lived, there were only two school systems—one for black students and one for white students. The Pearsall Plan allowed the Indian community to use state money to establish a private Indian school in Warren County in 1957. Eventually, the county made the school public. The Indian school existed until 1965, when all Warren County schools integrated.

A federal court later ruled the Pearsall Plan unconstitutional, and the state

Elementary-age students at an all-black school before desegregation. *Image courtesy of the North Carolina Museum of History. Time line image of representative George H. White.*

eventually becomes the Agricultural and Technical College of North Carolina and then N.C. A&T State University.

1896 George Henry White benefits from Fusion politics by winning election to the U.S. House of Representatives from North Carolina's 2nd Congressional District. He serves from 1897 to 1901 and seeks to promote and protect African American interests. He introduces the first anti-lynching bill and appoints African Americans to federal positions in his district. White is the last black representative for the next quarter century and the last from the state until 1992.

1898 The Wilmington Race Riot occurs when white Democrats overthrow Wilmington's elected Republican government. Whites burn the office and press of the African American newspaper the *Daily Record*. State newspapers report 11 blacks killed, 25 blacks wounded, and three white men killed. Black and white Republicans resign, and the Democrats install a white supremacist city government.

North Carolina sends three African American infantry companies and two white regiments to serve with other segregated units in the Spanish-American War.

John Merrick and Dr. Aaron Moore found the North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance Company in Durham.

1900 Democrats regain control of the governorship and the General Assembly through a harsh white supremacy campaign.

The "Suffrage Amendment" to the state constitution institutes a literacy requirement for voting. It includes a "grandfather clause" that allows illiterate white men to vote but effectively disfranchises men of color.

Because many Cherokee had previously voted Republican, Democrats take advantage of an 1895 federal court ruling that the Cherokee are wards of the federal government to curtail their suffrage. Local registrars deny them the right to vote.

The Croatan Indian Normal Schoo at Pembroke. It was the first state-supported normal school for Indians

assumed control over local school districts. By this time, schools in North Carolina had begun to desegregate. But numerous school systems had not integrated. The United States Supreme Court in 1971 upheld a decision that declared that the Charlotte school system must desegregate, and, if necessary, it must bus students to schools outside their communities to achieve integration. After this decision, public schools throughout North Carolina began busing students in order to desegregate fully. By the 1971–1972 school year, North Carolina finally had met the requirements of the Supreme Court's *Brown* decision satisfactorily.

African Americans and American Indians often disagreed on whether integration was the best thing for their communities. The majority of African American communities supported the desegregation of schools, but within the Lumbee/Tuscarora Indian community of Robeson County, many people felt that Indians could better maintain their culture and small communities if they controlled the schools that their children attended. Former Indian school principal Danford Dial noted that many Indians also resented having to attend schools with whites who had mistreated them. He said that Indians "had been driven out of the cafés and driven out of the drugstores, at the soda fountains and ice-cream counter, and hadn't been served in all these years, and now they're trying to make us go to school with these people." Although many individuals in the Lumbee/Tuscarora community actively fought the loss of their schools, eventually Robeson County desegregated as well.

Although the hard-fought struggles of the past achieved the integration of schools in North Carolina, today many people think that racial groups are beginning to segregate themselves in schools again by choice. With culturally specific charter schools, and the end of mandatory busing to achieve integration, schools in many communities are becoming predominantly black, Hispanic, Indian, or white. While the situation continues to change across the state, North Carolina will never again move to a system of forced segregation. As former United States president James A. Garfield said, "Next in importance to freedom and justice is popular education, without which neither freedom nor justice can be permanently maintained."

Tar Heel Junior Historian Essay Contest Winner Elementary Division, First Place

by Sierra Silvers*

Monday morning, February 1, 1960, started off like any other morning, except I had to go to the dentist. Ugh!

As Mom and I drove through our quaint town of Greensboro, North Carolina, I thought how lucky I was to live in such a safe, friendly place. Unfortunately, very soon I was to realize life wasn't as simple as I thought.

When I arrived at the dentist's office, my name, Sierra Silvers, was called right away, and I spent a very uncomfortable hour in the dentist's chair. To make up for my horrible morning, Mom said we could go to the F. W. Woolworth's store for lunch. She liked their turkey 'n' dressing dinner, while I loved their famous meatloaf dinner with mashed potatoes, gravy, and coleslaw. Yum!

Sierra Silvers *(above)*. Time line image of a segregated classroom. *Images courtesy of the North Carolina Museum of History.*

When we arrived at the corner of South Elm Street . . . where Woolworth's was located, I quickly hurried inside and headed straight to the back of the store. Woolworth's lunch counter was always busy. While Mom did some shopping, I found myself witnessing history in the making. Four black freshmen from the Agricultural and Technical College of North Carolina took vacant seats at the store's "whites only" lunch counter. They had no idea what might happen. Franklin McCain, Joseph McNeil, David Richmond, and Ezell Blair . . . sat down, ordered coffee, and waited. The waitress ignored them, as did the store manager and a pacing policeman. Some white customers taunted the students, while two others patted them on the back, whispering, "Ah, you should have done it ten years ago."

Geneva Tisdale, a black woman who worked at the lunch counter, along with other black employees, soon found their way to the back of the lunch area, where they huddled together, wondering what was going to happen.

They were not the only ones wondering what was happening. Customers continued to say things that were not very nice. They called the four students "niggers" and "darkies." One group of men wanted to know what those "jigaboos" thought they were doing sitting down at our lunch counter. Some men shouted that they needed to be taught a lesson.

None of the four black men responded to the jeers and taunts being flung at them. They did not raise their voices or look around. They sat quietly and resolutely, as if they were on a very important mission. Their bodies were a little stiff, their hands perhaps shook a little, but it was their eyes that spoke. I saw courage, but also fear, determination, humiliation, and pain. It was their pain that touched me the most and made me start to think, "Why this outburst of anger?" In the whites you could feel their condemnation and fears. There was a sense of panic about them. These people were just plain scared of four young men who spoke quietly, threatened no one, and possessed no weapons to harm anyone with. How was

1903 Booker T. Washington addresses the N.C. Industrial Association's annual fair. He advises African Americans to content themselves working in agriculture, reject migration, and seek the type of education that will promote community building.

1906 Gov. Robert B. Glenn calls the National Guard to respond after five African American men are lynched in Salisbury.

1907 The General Assembly passes a compulsory school attendance law and authorizes secondary schools for whites.

1910 The National Religious Training School and Chautauqua, founded by Dr. James E. Shepard, opens in Durham. In 1923 it becomes a state-supported school to train African American teachers. Two years later, the General Assembly makes it the nation's first state-supported liberal arts college for blacks, named the N.C. College for Negroes. It eventually becomes N.C. Central University.

1911 The state recognizes a group of people descended from the Saponi, Tutelo, and Occaneechi tribes as the Indians of Person County.

The General Assembly changes the name of the Croatans to the Indians of Robeson County. The Croatan Normal School is renamed the Indian Normal School of Robeson County.

The Coharie Indians receive state recognition, but it is rescinded two years later.

The Greensboro city council passes an ordinance requiring separate white and black residential areas. Other southern cities have similar ordinances.

1913 The Indians of Robeson County change their name to Cherokee Indians of Robeson County.

1914 The Cherokee in western North Carolina hold the first Cherokee Fall Fair to encourage tourism in their region.

1918–32 More than 800 Rosenwald schools for

*Sierra Silvers won the 2004 elementary Tar Heel Junior Historian Essay Contest with her entry above. She was a fourth-grade member of the junior historian club North Carolina Pioneers, Burnsville Elementary School, Burnsville, Jeannie Miller and Donna Banks, advisers.

A closed lunch counter. *Image courtesy of the North Carolina Museum of History.*

it possible for the color of someone's skin to cause so much fear on both sides? I admit I've never been around a lot of black people, but my mom has a black lady [who] comes into our home to clean, and my brothers and I call her Aunt Cindy. She is a caring, kind, loving person who sings gospel hymns as she works. I feel safe and happy while she is in my home, and I can't wait until the next time she's to come. Yet here I stand in this store watching white men and women trying to pretend that these black men are inferior to whites, when all the time it is our behavior that is in need of repair, not theirs. If someone asked me what I felt while witnessing this event, I would have to tell them I felt confused, ashamed, and embarrassed.

Suddenly Mom appeared and gently took me by the hand, and we slowly worked our way out of the store. I said, "Mom, what's going on? Why is everyone so mad at these four men? What did they do wrong?"

Mom said, "Quiet, Sierra. We'll talk about it later, when Daddy comes home." We rode in silence the rest of the way.

That evening I could hear Mom and Dad talking. Finally, I could stand it no longer, so I went downstairs.

"Daddy," I said. "Could we talk about what happened today? I would like to understand what's going on."

Daddy took a deep breath and pulled me on his lap.

"There are a lot of us who would like to understand this thing that is happening to our nation, Sierra. White people in the South are being asked to change the only way of life they know. Letting go of fears and hatreds held from generation to generation isn't easy. Even if way down inside themselves most people know this is wrong, their pride keeps them from accepting what is right. Yet on the other side, black men and women did not want to be kidnapped from their homelands and brought to a strange country, stripped of their dignity, and forced into a life of slavery and all that it entailed. So today, the blacks are angry about the hardships their ancestors endured, and even though slavery was abolished in the South, they are still treated unequally. They have no right to vote or have access to all businesses. Their children are not allowed the opportunity to have as good an education as white children. Finding good jobs is difficult for them. But all these things are dreams of the African American. God created all men to be equal. Our country was born out of the desire for freedom from persecution and settled by many different nationalities. We all have one common bond, which is a desire for a better life for our families. The blood, sweat, and tears of all races are a part of this country's growth. We must learn to live together in peace or risk destroying all that this nation has worked so hard to build. United we will stand, [and] divided we shall fall."

That night as I knelt to say my prayers, I asked God to help all people everywhere to remember that all men are created equal. His word teaches us to "do unto others as you would have them do unto you." Tomorrow, when Aunt Cindy comes, I'm going to give her a big hug and ask her to bring her granddaughter along the next time she comes to our house. Her name is Sally, and we're the same age. After all, my mom says [that] you can never have too many friends.

"Double Voting" in Robeson County: A Reminder of an Unequal Past

*by Bruce Barton**

Believe it or not, at one time *double voting* was as common and acceptable in Robeson County as the widespread jobs of cropping tobacco or picking cotton. None of these exercises is common among the people there today. Double voting has since been outlawed, and mostly Hispanic croppers and pickers have replaced the American Indians, blacks, and whites who in the past performed the necessary farm chores—although tobacco and cotton are still staple crops in Robeson County.

This cartoon appeared in the book *An Indian Manifesto*, written by Bruce Barton in 1983. It shows the Lone Ranger and his sidekick, Tonto, who is protesting against the double vote. *Image courtesy of Bruce Barton. Time line image of button courtesy of the North Carolina Museum of History.*

Double Voting in Robeson County before 1975

I remember well the time before the federal courts outlawed the evil practice of double voting. Back then in Robeson County, some people had two votes, and others had only one. Before 1975, six school systems existed in Robeson County. They were Lumberton, St. Pauls, Fairmont, Maxton, and Red Springs (each of these towns had its own school system), and the Public Schools of Robeson County, which included everyone else. So people who lived within the town limits of Lumberton, Maxton, St. Pauls, Red Springs, and Fairmont had two votes for board of education members. They voted on the makeup of their own boards of education, as well as the board of education for the rest of the county (the Robeson County schools). But the residents served by the county school system each had only one vote. That part of the county's population was 60 percent Indian, 20 percent African American, and 20 percent white.

I remember double voting as "the most evil political system ever devised by man," as one prominent Lumbee Indian educator said at the time. The first article I ever wrote for the newspaper *Carolina Indian Voice*, a weekly publication based in Pembroke, was entitled simply "Double Vote?" Many columns on the *nefarious* practice of double voting appeared in the publication before

African American students are built in North Carolina.

1919 Local officials deny voter registration to Cherokee veterans of WWI.

1920 The 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution gives women throughout the nation the right to vote, though North Carolina does not ratify the amendment until 1971. Cherokee women try to register to vote, but local officials prohibit them.

1921 North Carolina establishes the Division of Negro Education, with Nathan C. Newbold as director and George E. Davis as his assistant.

1924 Federal law places Cherokee lands in trust with the federal government and grants citizenship rights to all Indians. North Carolina holds that these rights apply in the state only after tribal lands are allotted.

1928 Annie Wealthy Holland of Gates County forms the N.C. Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers, the first such organization for African Americans in the state.

1929 Union agitation and a textile workers' strike at Loray Mill in Gastonia lead to the deaths of the town's police chief and of white labor leader Ella May Wiggins.

1930 Federal law grants citizenship to Cherokee Indians in North Carolina.

1932 Black ministers in Raleigh protest the dedication of the War Memorial Auditorium because they have to sit in the balcony.

1935 Indians in Robeson County become eligible to organize under the federal Wheeler-Howard Act, passed the previous year. Individuals must be at least half-blood Indians to receive recognition.

1938 African American students in Greensboro initiate a theater boycott to protest the absence of racially balanced movies.

Only 22 of 209 people tested in Robeson County qualify for recognition as Indians. Qualification is based on assessment of physical features.

1939 In response to the *Gaines* decision, North Carolina begins offering

Bruce Barton, the founder and first editor of the newspaper Carolina Indian Voice, *recently retired from teaching history in the Public Schools of Robeson County. He is now a freelance writer who focuses on the subject he knows best—the progressive Lumbee Indians of Robeson and adjoining counties. He also serves on the Civil Rights Exhibit Advisory Board at the North Carolina Museum of History.*

the federal courts outlawed the unfair scheme. The practice basically kept many people of color out of positions of power in the Robeson County school system, because the rural Indian and black residents were not able to overcome the double vote of the mostly white voters within the towns. The white voters usually elected white people to public offices, including the county school board. Often the white members elected to the county school board actually lived in the towns, where their children went to school, yet they controlled the county's rural schools. It was a strange situation indeed!

Facts to Know

- *Double voting* is a political practice that gives one group of people two votes and another group one vote.
- *Nefarious* means wicked or evil.
- *Dilute* means to thin or reduce the strength of something
- Lumbee Indians make up the largest Indian tribe east of the Mississippi River. They reside in southeastern North Carolina, with the largest concentration in Robeson County.
- The 2000 United States Census lists 123,610 residents in Robeson County, with 38 percent Indian, 33 percent white, 25 percent African American, and 4 percent Hispanic.
- Lumberton is the county seat in Robeson County.

Double Voting Broken

By the mid-1970s, the question "Have you heard from the lawsuit to break 'double voting'?" had become a form of greeting between Indians and

Superior Court Judge Dexter Brooks, who died in 2002. At the time of his death, he was the senior resident superior court judge in Robeson County. *Image courtesy of [illegible]*

their friends in Robeson County. And there the matter rested until April 23, 1975, when the United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit, sitting in Richmond, Virginia, changed the situation resoundingly by ruling that double voting was unconstitutional because it essentially *diluted* the votes of the residents of the Robeson County school administrative unit. District court judge Algernon Butler, in the Eastern District's federal court, had originally ruled in January 1975 that double voting was acceptable because "a compelling state interest justified participation of city board members" in the affairs of the county school system. The Richmond appeals court, however, essentially overruled Judge Butler's original ruling by saying, "We reverse the district court and remand [or return] the case for declaratory judgment and the fashioning of other appropriate relief." The ruling from the appeals court canceled double voting forever. The three-judge panel in Richmond, with Judge Harrison L. Winner writing the decision, declared that "the votes of the residents of the county school board geographic area are unconstitutionally diluted in the election of the seven members of the county school board."

The Lumbee Indians, especially in Robeson County, were happy indeed! The lead attorney for the lawsuit was noted civil rights activist Barry Nakell. Nakell said in a recent interview that "we should never forget to give credit to former resident superior court judge Dexter Brooks," who was a Lumbee attending the UNC-Chapel Hill School of Law at the time. Nakell remembered that "[Brooks] did outstanding work in the litigation and had the fortitude to see the suit through." Nakell added, "The decision opened up exciting prospects for Indian voters, who could now participate in the running of their school system." After double voting was outlawed, the single-system Public Schools of Robeson County had two Lumbee Indian school superintendents and numerous Indian board members and administrators. The five town school systems and the county school system eventually merged into one, the Public Schools of Robeson County. The eleven-member board of education is presently made up of four whites, four Indians, and three African Americans.

Footsteps of Change with VISTA

*by Alice Eley Jones**

I grew up in the small northeastern North Carolina port village of Murfreesboro. I belonged to that generation of post-World War II "baby boomers" who came of age in the prosperity and Cold War tensions of the 1950s. My life was simple enough. The days and nights of my youth revolved around my family, First Baptist Church, and Riverview School. My favorite activities were reading, cooking, and watching television. I had a black dog named Blackie and a white cat named Snowy, and I shared with my brothers and sisters a yellow parakeet called Chucky, as well as a black rabbit named Satan.

In the fifth grade, I discovered what slavery truly meant to the history of my African American ancestors. I also learned that there were laws created to deny me rights guaranteed to other Americans because of the color of my skin. For the first time in my life, I grew understandably fearful. Segregation stole the innocence of my youth.

Mr. Dudley Flood, my eighth-grade teacher, inspired my classmates and me to become well educated in order to improve the lives of our people. To do so would mean to follow in the footsteps of Booker T. Washington (college president, educator, and cofounder of the Rosenwald Schools project), George Washington Carver (educator and scientist), Mary McLeod Bethune (educator and political leader), and others who had worked to uplift black people. The goal represented a tall order for young lives, but it was necessary.

I became one of the first black students to attend the previously all-white Murfreesboro High School. Upon my graduation in 1968, the Reverend James A. Felton (local teacher and civil rights leader) invited me to join the Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA) program at Shaw University in Raleigh.

The author's eighth-grade teacher, Dudley E. Flood *(second row, standing at right)*, inspired her to excel in education as a traditional way of helping fellow African Americans. *Image courtesy of Alice Eley Jones. Time line image of 1951 strategy session for entering the law school at UNC-Chapel Hill courtesy of the North Carolina Museum of History.*

Alice Eley Jones as a student at Murfreesboro's segregated Riverview School, ca. 1957. *Image courtesy of Alice Eley Jones.*

My parents were understandably uneasy for me to become involved. It was a difficult time in North Carolina and in America. In the fall of 1968 I could vividly recall the recent and violent deaths of several civil rights leaders in our nation: President John F. Kennedy and his brother Robert; Medgar Evers, Mississippi leader of the NAACP; Malcolm X, former Nation of Islam civil rights leader; and the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., to name

graduate courses in liberal arts and the professions at the N.C. College for Negroes in Durham and in agriculture and technology at the Agricultural and Mechanical College in Greensboro.

1940 North Carolina abolishes the poll tax, used to limit minority voting.

The Indian Normal School of Robeson County grants its first college degree.

1942 The Southern Conference on Race Relations brings together 59 black leaders from 10 southern states at the N.C. College for Negroes. A committee headed by Charles S. Johnson of Fisk University issues the Durham Manifesto, which demands voting rights and equal educational and job opportunities for African Americans.

1943 Black tobacco workers go on strike at R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Company in Winston-Salem.

The N.C. Conference of NAACP Branches forms in Charlotte.

1946–47 Cherokee veterans of WWII register to vote.

1946 Qualla Arts and Crafts Mutual, a Cherokee crafts cooperative, forms.

1947 CORE tests a Supreme Court decision against segregation in interstate bus travel by sending eight African American men on Greyhound and Trailways bus rides. Riders are arrested in Asheville, Durham, and Chapel Hill. This "Journey of Reconciliation" becomes the model for the 1961 Freedom Rides.

The first Indian mayor of the town of Pembroke is elected. Previously the governor appointed the mayors, all non-Indians.

1951 A court order requires the University of North Carolina to admit minority students to its graduate and professional schools. Floyd McKissick, Harvey Beech, J. Kenneth Lee, and James Lassiter become the first African Americans admitted to the law school.

1952 Catholic parish schools in North Carolina begin desegregation.

**Alice Eley Jones operates her history consulting business, Historically Speaking, as well as Minnie Troy Publishers, in her hometown of Murfreesboro. In 1969 Jones received the Minnie Fuller Memorial Scholarship for her outstanding work as a VISTA volunteer. Throughout her career, she has served in various capacities in the history field and has won numerous awards.*

a few. Because of the controversy over civil rights, black churches were being bombed and burned. Riots had become commonplace on college campuses. Northern cities were engulfed in flames. And antiwar demonstrations and civil rights marches filled urban and small-town streets alike. However, I readily accepted Rev. Felton's invitation and completed a year of service to my people and my country, and this contribution continues to influence my life.

Jones *(in dark glasses on left)* poses with a group of fellow VISTA volunteers at a 1969 conference held at New Ahoskie Baptist Church. *Image courtesy of Alice Eley Jones.*

VISTA Volunteers

In 1963 President John F. Kennedy spoke of a domestic (meaning inside the United States) volunteer program modeled after the newly established Peace Corps, which worked internationally. President Lyndon B. Johnson declared a "war on poverty" and signed the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964. The act created VISTA and fulfilled the dream of the recently assassinated President Kennedy.

I completed six weeks of in-service training in 1968 and lived on the Shaw University campus. I received training as a community organizer to serve as a liaison between poor communities and the government institutions created to assist them.

My first in-service field duty was to provide voter education information to the people of south Raleigh, where many African Americans lived. Many of the people confided that the 1968 election was the first one in which they ever voted. Several were frightened and would go to their precincts (voting places) only if driven there by me or other volunteers. As a rule, VISTA volunteers were allowed to take voters to their polling places to vote but could not enter the buildings with them.

During Jones's year of community organization, she worked in both urban and rural areas. She noted that the living conditions of many rural blacks had not changed since the end of the nineteenth century.

I educated community members on their civic responsibilities and civil rights. Community members, not the volunteers, assumed the leadership roles. At the end of my year of service, I could either retire from VISTA or be reassigned to a different community. The goal was to prepare community members to become leaders themselves.

Rocky Mount, in eastern North Carolina, became my permanent field assignment. My regional supervisor was Earl Stancell, based in Washington, D.C. My field supervisor was Thelma J. Miller, of Durham's Foundation for Community Development. Together Thelma and I printed and dispensed community leaflets; organized community groups; recruited students who had dropped out of school into Job Corps, an employment training program; and organized day-care centers and senior citizen groups. We also acted as advisers to students at the black Booker T. Washington Senior High when they voted to boycott classes to protest the school's proposed closing and merger with the white Rocky Mount Senior High.

I attended civil rights meetings where impassioned leaders demanded change and organized demonstrations. I was introduced to Eva Clayton, a civic leader and businesswoman, and Floyd McKissick, an attorney, civil rights leader, and businessman, in the Warren County pine forest

slated to become the Soul City community. I attended meetings in Winston-Salem with Black Panthers (a militant, youthful civil rights group) and marched with Howard Fuller (director of the Foundation for Community Development), Ben Ruffin (a North Carolina college student leader), and Arch Foster (a staff member of the Foundation for Community Development) in Durham. I met national civil rights leaders Julian Bond, Golden Frinks, and Jesse Jackson at a Raleigh civil rights conference. I often found myself in the midst of the nearly constant civil unrest in Rocky Mount, Raleigh, and Durham.

In the summer of 1969, two Americans walked on the moon, and I took my first airplane flight. I had been selected to attend the national VISTA Volunteer Conference in Washington, D.C., as the representative from Shaw University. I was honored to meet many people from different backgrounds from across the nation who were dedicated to empowering fellow Americans through education and civic participation.

Jones recalls that many tenant farmers were afraid to listen to her discuss voting rights, for fear of being evicted from their struggling farms. *Time line image of a ca. 1960 sit-in in Raleigh courtesy of the North Carolina Museum of History.*

In the short span of a year, I marched for equality along with students from Shaw University, St. Augustine's College, North Carolina State University, North Carolina Central University, and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Marchers included high school students, children, the elderly, men, women, blacks, whites, and American Indians.

I grew accustomed to being stopped by local police officers, county sheriffs, and state patrol officers. I received threatening telephone calls, and my car was routinely followed. I rarely traveled alone or at night. I accepted that my telephone was tapped. The VISTA organization would provide an attorney if I were arrested, yet black lawyers in Rocky Mount, Raleigh, and Durham volunteered their services anyway. Though I came close several times, I was never arrested.

My most lasting impression from that year with VISTA remains the gratitude of the people whose communities I served. I also learned that to help those who are less fortunate than ourselves makes us good citizens. America needs the resources of all her people, and being a citizen of goodwill is the greatest gift we can give our youth, our nation, and ourselves.

At the end of her year as a VISTA volunteer, Jones was awarded the Minnie Fuller Memorial Scholarship in 1969. She used the money to enroll at North Carolina Central University, where she earned BA and MA degrees in history. She considers her most important work to be the annual programs that she has presented at Historic Stagville since 1985. Here she pours libations at a special ceremony for esteemed historian Dr. John Hope Franklin *(in light coat)* at a 1996 Stagville program. *Image courtesy of Alice Eley Jones.*

1952–54 Waccamaw Indian School opens in Columbus County. It operates until 1969.

1953 Elementary schools at Fort Bragg army base are desegregated.

1953 The state changes the name of the people formerly called the Croatans, Indians of Robeson County, and Cherokee Indians of Robeson County to the Lumbee.

1954 In response to the *Brown* decision, the Greensboro school board begins an effort to desegregate the city's public schools.

1955 The University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill admits the first African American freshmen: Leroy Frasier, John Lewis Brandon, and Ralph Frasier.

The General Assembly adopts a resolution opposing racial integration in the state's public schools. The legislature gives local school boards control over the desegregation of their schools.

1956 The General Assembly adopts the Pearsall Plan, which offers North Carolinians alternatives to attending integrated public schools.

1957 The Haliwa Indian School opens in Warren County. It operates until 1968.

Small numbers of African American students enroll in previously white public schools in Greensboro, Charlotte, and Winston-Salem, beginning a period of token integration.

Seven black activists led by Rev. Douglas E. Moore challenge segregation with a sit-in at Durham's Royal Ice Cream parlor.

1958 A large group of armed Lumbee break up a Ku Klux Klan rally near Maxton.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. visits North Carolina. He delivers speeches in Raleigh and Greensboro.

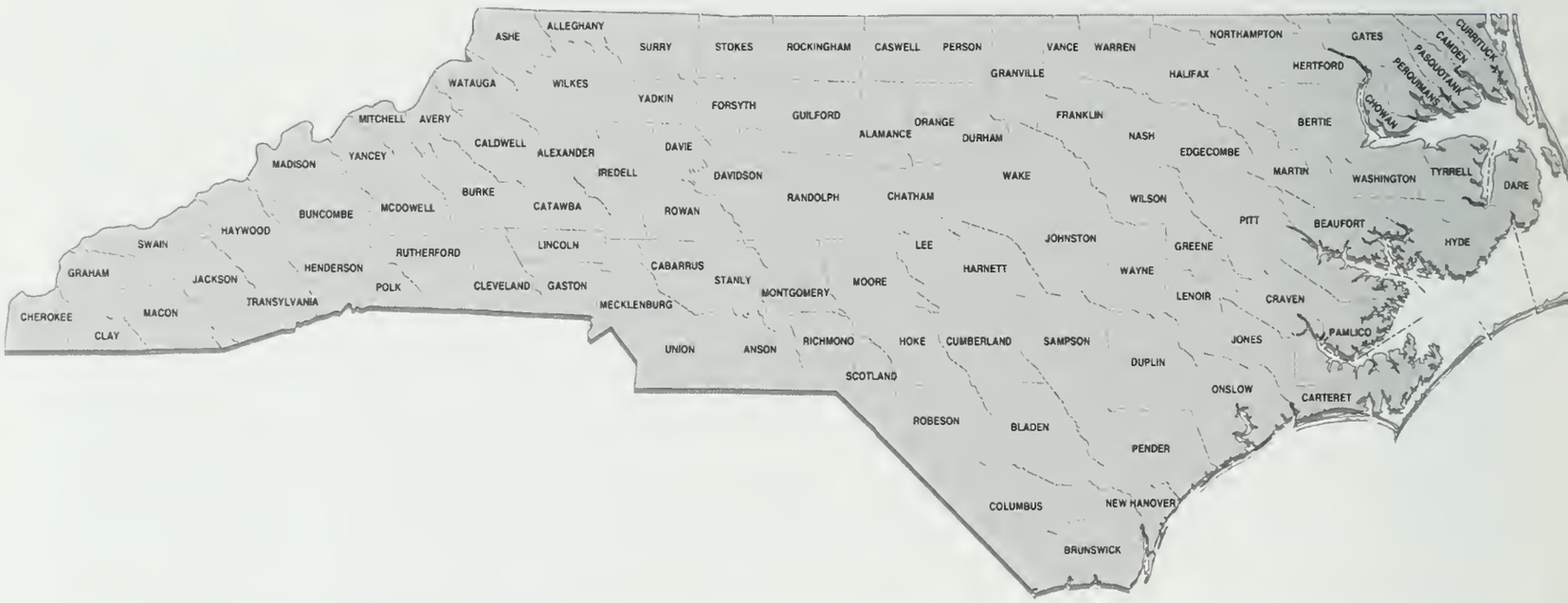
1960 Four black students from A&T College of North Carolina stage a peaceful sit-in after they are refused service at a Woolworth lunch counter in Greensboro. The mode of protest used by Ezell Blair, Franklin McCain, David Richmond, and Joseph McNeil quickly spreads across the South.

ACTIVITIES SECTION

Tar Heel Junior Historian Association

Map Activity

Numerous civil rights–related events took place in North Carolina during the struggle for racial equality. Some of these incidents are listed below. Place the name of the county in which the event took place on the blank line beside the clue. Use the information in this issue of the magazine and other resources to complete the activity. On the map provided, chart these incidents by placing a dot in the counties that you list. Answers appear at the bottom of the page.



1. County where race riot occurred in Wilmington in 1898 _____
2. County where private Indian school was established in 1957 _____
3. County where a sit-in took place in 1957 at Durham's Royal Ice Cream parlor _____
4. County where the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee was founded in 1960 at Shaw University in Raleigh _____
5. County where the National Guard was deployed after five African American men were lynched in 1906 in Salisbury _____
6. County where nationally recognized sit-ins began on February 1, 1960, in Greensboro _____
7. County where a United States Supreme Court decision in 1971 allowed busing to be used to integrate the Charlotte schools _____
8. County where the unethical practice of "double voting" occurred _____
9. County where a Ku Klux Klan rally was stopped in Maxton in 1958 by American Indians _____
10. County where Golden Frinks organized a movement in Edenton to protest segregation _____
11. County where a yearlong school boycott helped to preserve historically black schools _____
12. County where the first black students were admitted to the University of North Carolina law school at Chapel Hill in 1951 _____

Answers: 1. New Hanover; 2. Warren; 3. Durham; 4. Wake; 5. Rowan; 6. Guilford; 7. Mecklenburg; 8. Robeson; 9. Robeson; 10. Chowan; 11. Hyde; 12. Orange.

Promotional Activity

Throughout the Civil Rights era, individuals created buttons, posters, and other memorabilia to promote aspects of the movement. Below, see examples of buttons produced during the era. Each one carries a different message. Consider an issue that concerns you today. It may be related to your school, your church, or some other organization. What important aspects of the issue do you wish to promote? After you determine what you wish onlookers to learn about your issue, create a design for a button, poster, bookmark, or other item. Use the space below for your design. After your design has been created, use the necessary materials to produce your item and then share it with your class.

Images of buttons courtesy of the North Carolina Museum of History.

Personal Reflections: Lest I Forget the Civil Rights Movement, the Ligon Jubilee Singers, and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

by Ann Hunt Smith*

Tell me, do you dream? I know you do.
Dreams, how real they seem.
That's why I dream.

One of my fondest dreams became a reality when, in September 1967, I became the vocal music teacher at my high school alma mater, John W. Ligon, in Raleigh. My former teacher, Emily May Morgan Kelly, had taught music for more than forty years in the city's only high school for blacks. Mrs. Kelly had dedicated her life to exposing African American children to the best of classical choral literature.

During the 1950s, when I was a student at Ligon, it was considered an honor to be a part of a chorus and, especially, to be selected for one of the special ensembles. When I returned to Ligon as a teacher, that was no longer the case. European classical music had little appeal to many of the students. Some students' interests were sparked by the new electives that were designed to prepare them for a world of advancing technology. And a group of underprivileged and disadvantaged youth was being snared into a false vision of hope and fulfillment through the use of drugs such as marijuana and heroin. But an amazing number of drug users came from prominent families in Raleigh. They knew that when tested for the military draft into the Vietnam War, they would be rejected if a trace of any illegal substance were found.

A group of singers harmonizes. *Image courtesy of the North Carolina Museum of History.*

Shocked, slightly bewildered, and overwhelmed, I faced a challenge to recruit young people to the choral program. Since class schedules had become final before school ended the previous year, I had to create a group that would meet before the regular school day began. I designed a class that exposed students to the rich cultural heritage of traditional African American music. An outgrowth of the class was the development of a pageantlike music-drama presentation entitled "Black Music in Historical Perspective." Auditions were held to select thirty-eight talented students—the number that could fit on a chartered bus with two chaperones when we traveled to perpetuate the singing of black music. Including members of the morning group and my regular chorus enrollment, one hundred voices sang at our first performance of Peter Wilhousky's arrangement of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic," on the stage of Raleigh's Memorial Auditorium. The mission to revive an interest in the choral program at Ligon High School was accomplished.

The classes in the regular music curriculum—Mixed Chorus, Boys' and Girls' Ensembles, and Music Appreciation—were filled to capacity. The early-morning group became the Ligon Jubilee Singers, who performed throughout the city of Raleigh at schools and churches in black and white communities. Leading soloists and sectional leaders, to the surprise of teachers and students, were also star athletes, cheerleaders, and others. Between 1968 and 1971, before the integra-

*Ann Hunt Smith is a former teacher and student at Ligon High School in Raleigh. She wrote the song "Po' Martin" and has been a champion for change during her adult years. Presently, she is a composer, a playwright, and a music director for two outdoor dramas and an indoor theater production.

tion of the school, the Ligon Jubilee Singers performed concerts in Virginia, New Jersey, New York, and Massachusetts, captivating audiences with selections ranging from plantation work songs and "signal songs" used along the Underground Railroad to concert arrangements of traditional spirituals. (The Fisk Jubilee Singers, from whom the Ligon Singers got their name, introduced the spiritual to the world in 1871.) William Dawson, Nathaniel Dett, Jester Hairston, and H. T. Burleigh were favorite black composers whose arrangements the Ligon Jubilee Singers performed. Some of my most unforgettable experiences occurred during my years as music director of the Jubilee Singers. In this article, I hope to convey the impact that the Civil Rights movement and the death of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. had on my life and on the lives of my music students.

Dr. King during a visit to Durham in 1958. *Image courtesy of the North Carolina Museum of History.* Time line image of Hyde County boycott march in 1969. *Courtesy of the News and Observer Collection, North Carolina State Archives.*

At sunset on April 4, 1968, a shot rang out. Dr. King, who had been standing on the balcony of his room (No. 306) at the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, Tennessee, lay sprawled on the balcony floor. He had traveled to Memphis on a mission to lead a march in the city in support of striking sanitation workers. Walter Cronkite had almost completed his report on the *CBS Evening News* when he received the news that Dr. King had been wounded. All over the city of Raleigh, as in cities throughout the United States, families huddled together to hear the final word. It was after seven o'clock on April 4 when King was pronounced dead. CBS interrupted regular programming as Cronkite discussed King's life and his contributions to the Civil Rights movement. The network presented footage of King's speech "I've Been to the Mountaintop," which he had delivered in Memphis on April 3 at Mason Temple, the headquarters of the Church of God in Christ. (This address has been called "prophetic," as King had hinted at the end of the speech that he might not live to see the end of the Civil Rights movement.) No television reporters were on the scene when King was shot, because of an official curfew imposed in Memphis in an attempt to prevent civil rights violence. However, as soon as the media announced his death, riots and disturbances reportedly broke out in more than 125 cities in America. Students from St. Augustine's College paraded through the neighborhoods in east Raleigh (where I lived), chanting words of protest.

On the afternoon of April 5, 1968, students at Ligon High School could hear a crowd of angry voices chanting, "Burn, baby, burn!" Later we learned that students from nearby Shaw University ran down Fayetteville Street in outrage. Hudson Belk, a department store close to

1960 SNCC forms in Raleigh on the campus of Shaw University.

1965 North Carolina institutes the freedom-of-choice plan, which allows parents to choose the public schools their children attend.

1965 The homes of Charlotte civil rights activists Kelly Alexander Sr., Fred Alexander, Julius Chambers, and Reginald Hawkins are bombed.

The Haliwa receive state recognition as an Indian tribe.

1968 A federal court rules the state's freedom-of-choice plan unconstitutional.

Henry E. Frye becomes the first African American elected to the N.C. House of Representatives in the twentieth century.

Howard Lee is elected mayor of Chapel Hill, making him the first African American mayor of a predominantly white southern city.

1968–69 African American parents and students in Hyde County protest school reassignments with a yearlong boycott of public schools.

Cafeteria workers at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill go on strike for better wages and opportunities. Black student activists lend their support.

1969 In *Godwin v. Johnston County Board of Education*, a federal court declares the Pearsall Plan unconstitutional.

Police and National Guard fire on civil rights demonstrators at N.C. A&T College in Greensboro. One student is killed, and five police officers are injured.

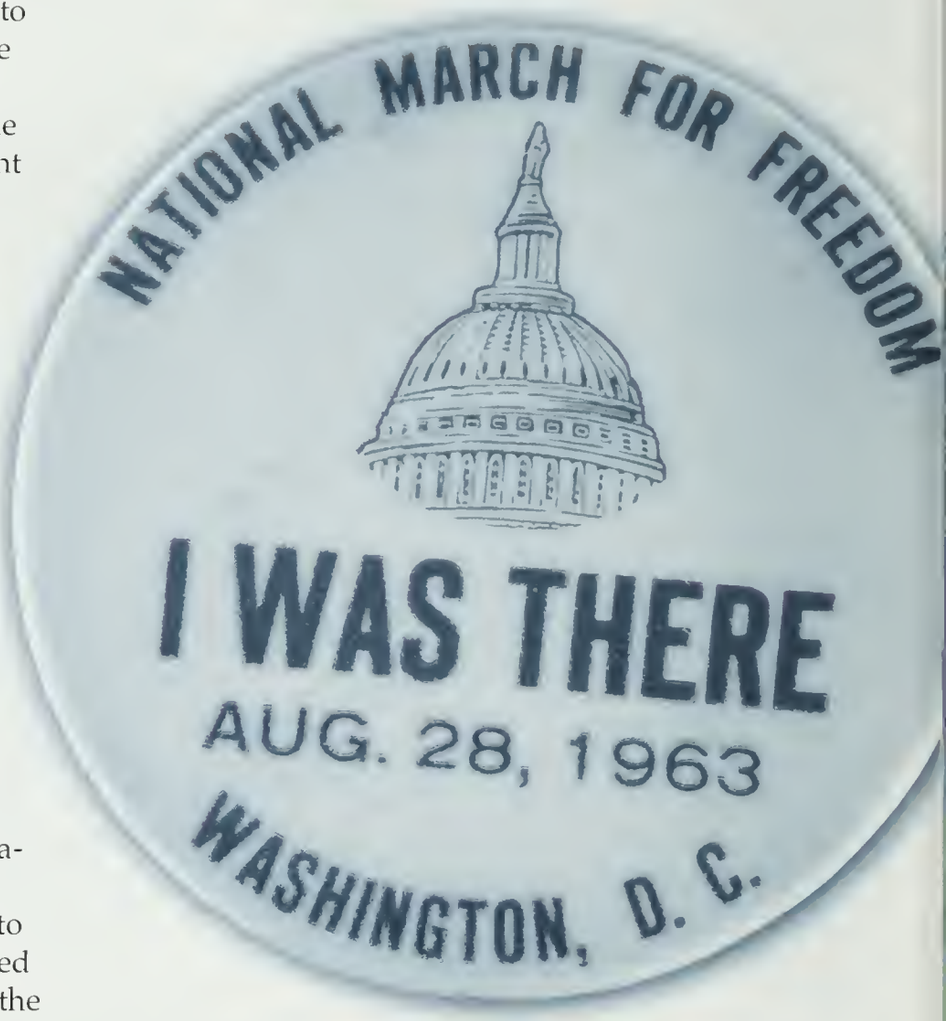
Durham resident Warren Wheeler founds Wheeler Flying Service, becoming the first African American to own a commercial airline.

1970 The Winston-Salem chapter of the Black Panther Party receives its charter from the national party. The chapter has its beginnings in the East Winston Organization of Black Liberation, a group of African American students advocating community activism to combat

the Shaw campus, was set ablaze. Sirens drowned out the angry voices as smoke fumes filled the air. It would have been difficult to contain my students in the classroom if the principal had not announced over the intercom that students leaving the building would be expelled for the rest of the year. I don't remember discussing with other teachers how they calmed their students, but I exclaimed to my students' watchful eyes and attentive ears, "You know those rioting must not be from Raleigh. Why would Raleigh citizens want to destroy their own property?" It angered me to see Dr. King's principle of nonviolent resistance being cast aside so soon. Then I began to share with the students some historical facts about the Civil Rights movement. The first SNCC (Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee), an offshoot of the SCLC (Southern Christian Leadership Conference), had been organized on Shaw's campus in April 1960. The SCLC had been founded and led by Dr. King, who sought to promote harmony among blacks and whites as a war was waged against all forms of injustice. By the time of King's assassination, groups had formed in opposition to his philosophy of nonviolent resistance. We were witnessing this rejection in the cry for "black power" from militant students.

Some of Raleigh's civil rights leaders joined the group to calm the angry mob. When school was dismissed at Ligon, parents were waiting to escort their children home. Students who had to travel by public transportation were alarmed to see the National Guard patrolling the downtown area, using bayonets to control the actions of the protesters. Fear hovered over the city that day and persisted throughout the period until King's funeral.

Two of my talented Jubilee Singers lingered at the close of the day with questions about the Civil Rights movement and comments about their parents' involvement in the movement. I shared with them my involvement with the college students at Shaw University and St. Augustine's College from 1960 to 1962 in strategic workshops that prepared us to "sit in" and "stand in." We picketed in downtown Raleigh and protested nonviolently against segregation at lunch counters, public parks, theaters, and swimming pools. Once we were drenched with water sprinklers as we paraded on the lawn in front of the segregated Howard Johnson motel. I also told the students that renowned civil rights leaders had visited our city to outline plans for the 1963 March on Washington. I will always remember James Farmer, founder of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), because he ate dinner in my house after one of our strategy workshops at the Davie Street Presbyterian Church. A bus of Freedom Riders had stopped in Raleigh to aid our civil rights leaders in organizing citizens for picket lines. Some of the Freedom Riders camped out at the farm of a local white citizen who was active in the movement. Others slept at the homes of involved Raleigh citizens. Some people, afraid of losing their jobs for publicly protesting, contributed to the cause by providing meals for the weary marchers. Not until they arrived in South Carolina did the Freedom Riders experience trouble, and some were jailed, though they protested peacefully.



"Do you think that King's dream of racial equality will become a reality?" asked one of my students. I did not give an answer. I remember walking to the piano, sliding along the piano bench, skimming over the keys in a jazz-blues progression. For the first time, a melody with lyrics emerged. As I sang, the other student rushed to get a tape recorder. Was I being inspired from hearing the speech "I Have a Dream"? Could it have been surfacing—my own dream, which I envisioned after living one year in an International House with thirteen women from different cultures around the world? (In 1958 segregation laws prohibited my attending the University of North Carolina for graduate study. The state had to award me a grant to attend a university of my choice, and I chose the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor.)

I wish it were possible for you to hear the soulful melody that I composed on that day, April 5, 1968. Here are the lyrics for "I Had a Dream Last Night."

I had a dream last night.
I dreamed that men of all races,
Forming one nation,
Would one day be in our history.
And love, justice, and equality,
We'd have these three.

I had a dream last night.
It took me wandering in space
To some unknown place,
Searching for peace and a little unity.
Lord, won't You please let these be?

And then I had the strangest dream.
An angel beckoned me near,
Pressed close to my ear.
I heard him say:
"Child, you're on your way. This is the day!
A day when dreams can drift out of sight.
A day when darkness must give way to light,
So truth can reign."

OH! Oh! Oh, oh, oh!
I had another dream last night.

I stopped and looked into the eyes of my students and added this "tag":

Tell me, do you dream? I know you do.
Dreams, how real they seem.
That's why I dream.

The 1967–1968 school year ended, and the Ligon Jubilee Singers traveled to Asheville in the Blue Ridge Mountains and to the Luray Caverns in Virginia. For many, it was their first time to the mountains, and for all of us, a first time to the caverns. This was a period of peaceful reflection after a busy, eventful, and yet productive school year. We continued on to Richmond, Virginia, where we had been invited by a chorus member's relative to give a concert at a local church. The performing area was much smaller than the large churches and auditoriums to which we were accustomed. We made that adjustment by eliminating from our performance the long line of people portraying slaves being driven from a slave ship to a plantation. (The wails and chants of the moving line of slaves set the mood for the songs of sorrow that followed as spontaneous cries against the conditions of life on the plantation.) We began the story by having the slaves huddle together after a day's work, and I provided narration to connect the origins of black music. Then a group of singers in the church in Virginia awed us with a song that they had created about Dr. King.

When we returned to school after summer vacation, the Jubilee Singers reminded me of that song. I began to arrange a piece for my group to perform, borrowing the Virginia group's chorus. I called our rendition "Po' Martin" and dedicated it to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Beginning with a poetic monologue, I set the mood for our bluesy folk piece.

Martin Luther King is dead, but blessed be wise Martin. He lived a life of nonviolence. He wanted peace amid the hatred and grief. He felt no humans were too low to stoop and lend a hand. We all shall reap, for he did sow a seed of love in man.

However, it is impossible to feel the power of "Po' Martin" without hearing it performed vocally.

(The group performs the following with sections of the chorus entering at random.)
Low Voices: *Martin Luther King is dead!*
Group 1: *Who killed po' Martin?*

police brutality and racial discrimination. Other North Carolina cities also have Black Panther chapters.

1971 After a federal court in Charlotte orders crosstown busing to achieve integration of the public schools, the Supreme Court upholds the decision in *Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education.*

A march to save North Carolina's historically black colleges and universities, which were threatened by the merger of all state-supported senior institutions into the University of North Carolina system, draws 3,000 students.

The Coharie and Waccamaw-Siouan receive state recognition as Indian tribes.

The General Assembly establishes the N.C. Commission of Indian Affairs with Bruce Jones, a Lumbee, as the first director.

The Lumbee Guaranty Bank in Pembroke is established. It is the first Indian-owned and -operated bank in the nation.

A white-owned grocery store is firebombed during racial violence in Wilmington. Nine African American men and a white woman, known as the Wilmington 10, are convicted of arson and other charges. They have their convictions overturned in 1980.

1972 Lumbee Horace Locklear becomes the first American Indian to pass the North Carolina bar exam.

Tuscaroras from Robeson County join other Indians in occupying the Bureau of Indians Affairs building in Washington, D.C., during the Trail of Broken Treaties protest. The Tuscaroras steal 7,200 pounds of records from the building and take them to Robeson County.

The Guilford Native American Association incorporates in Greensboro.

1973 Henry Ward Oxendine, a Lumbee from Robeson County, becomes the first American Indian elected to the General Assembly.

Old Main, the oldest brick building at Pembroke State University and a symbol

Female Trio: *Po' Martin.*
Group 2: *It's a shame! Shame, shame, shame.*
Group 3: *What a waste! Lord, help us!*

Verse 1 (Solo Voice):
An assassin at the window of a Tennessee town. He waited until he saw him, and then he shot Martin Luther down.

Chorus (sung to an old spiritual, "Oh, I Know I've Been Changed"):
Oh, ain't it a shame!
Oh, ain't it a shame!
Oh, ain't it a shame!
They shot Martin Luther down.

Verse 2 (Solo Voice):
Martin Luther, yes he died, and the world ne'er forget all the doors Martin opened.
Oh, he lives forever yet.

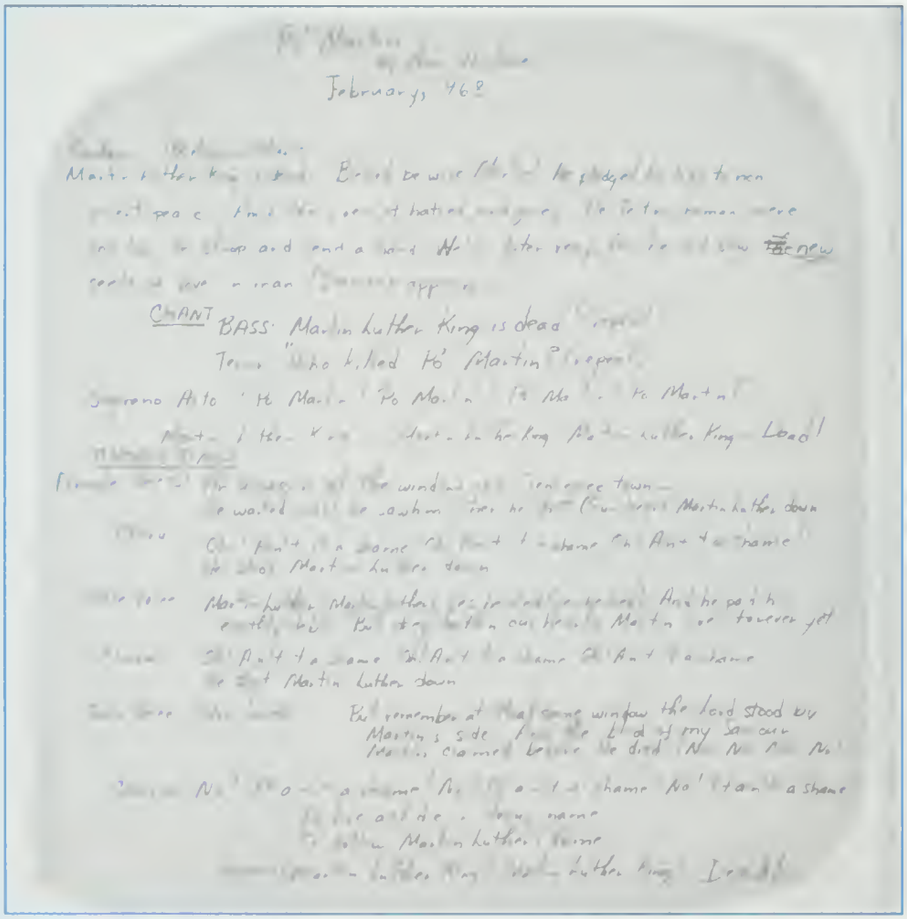
Chorus:
Oh, ain't it a shame!
Oh, ain't it a shame!
Oh, ain't it a shame!
They shot Martin Luther down.

Verse 3 (Mrs. Smith sings solo):
But remember at that same window, the Lord stood by Martin's side. For the blood of our Savior Martin claimed long before he died.

(Mrs. Smith continues):
No, it ain't no shame.
Oh no, it ain't no shame.
No, it ain't no shame.
To live and die in Jesus' name.
To follow Martin Luther's fame.
(The last line is repeated with all singing in harmony.)

(The song ends with every voice chanting Martin's name at a pitch they choose. This creates a dissonance that represents the pain and frustration experienced because of King's assassination.)
Martin Luther King! Martin Luther King!

(The final word, *Dead,* is spoken emphatically and is repeated over and over, with the voices diminishing until there is silence.)
Dead!


February, 1968
CHANT BASS: Martin Luther King is dead
Dead!

The [illegible] from the author's scrapbook contains a version of the song "Po' Martin" written in honor of Dr. King. Though the date at the top says February 1968, the song was actually composed in [illegible] after Dr. King's death. *Image courtesy of the North Carolina Museum of History.*

In the midst of bleakness and distress, and in exchange for despair, defeat, and destruction, Martin Luther King Jr. mustered up the faith to dream. The Ligon Jubilee Singers and their teacher dreamed as well. When the Ligon School was integrated in September 1972, the transition went smoothly. Elite whites from north Raleigh had been introduced to blacks from low- and middle-class environments through the Ligon Jubilee Singers' performances throughout the city. Though conflicts reportedly occurred in other schools, the Ligon School experienced no disturbances. The group called the Ligon Jubilee Singers dissolved as the high school students moved into other high schools in the city. The Ligon Choraliers, a group of junior high singers, emerged. This multicultural group warmed hearts in Raleigh with its repertoire of patriotic and folk songs geared toward establishing better relationships and respect for everyone. Today the Ligon School, established in 1954, is celebrating fifty years of excellence in the Raleigh community.

The Ku Klux Klan in North Carolina and the Battle of Maxton Field

by Jefferson Currie II

One day in the 1930s, sixteen-year-old Sanford Locklear was riding in a car with his father near their home when he had an experience that would help him to decide later in life to defend his people, the Lumbee Indians. Mr. Sanford learned that day about a group of people called the Ku Klux Klan.

I saw a group of people out there in the field. There was a lot of people out there groped around, and I saw people with hoods over their heads, and I, I was young, I didn't know, and I asked him [my father] *what those people was doing out there. . . . He said, "Them's Klansmens." I said, "Wha, wha, what they gonna do?" And he told me, said, "That's an organization." He said, "When they gather like that," said, "they talk about," he said, "sometimes they go to people's house and beat them." I said, "Why," I said, "why don't somebody do something about it?" He said, "Nobody can't get, you can't do nothing with them." I says, "Why?" He said, "Well, it's an organization," he said, "and they pull together." Says, "You can't, you can't mess with them." I says, "Well, why couldn't, you know, a, a group of people go out there and run them away?" Says, "It's their land. They're having meetings on it. They can do what they want to do."*

The Ku Klux Klan formed in Pulaski, Tennessee, after the Civil War had ended.

This ca. 1960s image shows Klansmen holding a ceremony in a field. Time line image of protestors at a ca. 1966 Ku Klux Klan rally. *Both images courtesy of the News and Observer Collection, North Carolina State Archives.*

Six former Confederate army officers established the social organization in the winter of 1865–1866. The society soon became an outlet for white southerners opposed to the blacks and whites who supported the new Republican-controlled Reconstruction governments in southern states. The Klan activities in North

of cultural pride, burns under suspicious circumstances. It is reconstructed in 1979 and eventually houses the Department of American Indian Studies and the Museum of the Native American Resource Center.

1973 Clarence Lightner becomes Raleigh's first African American mayor. He serves until 1975.

1976 The Metrolina Native American Association incorporates in Charlotte.

The Waccamaw-Siouan tribe begins governing itself by tribal council and tribal chief.

1977 The General Assembly repeals the state's ban on interracial marriage.

The General Assembly declines to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment.

1979 Members of the Communist Party and the Ku Klux Klan clash during an anti-Klan rally in Greensboro. Klan gunfire kills five Communist supporters. A court later clears Klan members of murder charges.

Civil Rights Time Line (United States)

1830 Congress passes and President Andrew Jackson signs the controversial Indian Removal Act calling for American Indians in the East to be forced from their homes to lands west of the Mississippi River.

1831 Slave preacher Nat Turner leads 20 followers in a bloody revolt through Southampton County, Va., near the North Carolina border. The North Carolina militia is called out to assist in stopping the rebellion.

1832 The Supreme Court rules that the Cherokee Nation constitutes a sovereign nation within the state of Georgia, subject only to federal law. That ruling remains the basis for American Indian tribal sovereignty.

1835 A small, unauthorized group of men signs the Cherokee Removal Treaty. The Cherokee Indians protest the treaty, and Chief John Ross collects more than 15,000 signatures, representing most of the Cherokee population, on a petition requesting the

A Klansman appears in costume on a nineteenth-century postcard. *Image courtesy of the North Carolina Museum of History.*

Carolina were often intensely focused on people (black, Indian, and white) who supported the civil rights gained by African Americans and Indians as a result of Reconstruction policies in the South. Often while wearing masks and hoods, the Klan staged raids to disarm persons of color, burn the houses and outbuildings of people friendly to blacks and Indians, and attack vocal Republican supporters. Eventually North Carolina arrested numerous Klansmen in the 1870s for these raids and activities, ending most overt actions. But some smaller groups, loosely affiliated with the old Ku Klux Klan, maintained their violent activities well into the late nineteenth century.

At the dawning of the twentieth century in North Carolina, African Americans and American Indians had lost all political power within the state and federal governments as a result of the actions of "white supremacist" leaders. Under the cruel system known as Jim Crow, people of color lost their right to vote and were generally oppressed by segregation laws and social customs. In the social, economic, and political instability after World War I, the Ku Klux Klan gained new power. Blacks, foreigners, and trade unionists, among others, were blamed for the condition of the country and attacked by the Klan. Klan membership in the United States swelled to more than 3 million in the 1920s, and blacks and Indians continued to suffer the humiliation of persistent persecution by the group. By the 1930s, the large, organized Klan marches of the 1920s had ceased, and the organization again broke into smaller, local groups.

This editorial cartoon refers to the disrupted January 1958 Ku Klux Klan rally at Hayes Millpond, near Maxton. *Image courtesy of the Museum of the Native American Resource Center, UNC-Pembroke.*

Following the end of World War II, returning black and Indian military veterans pushed for greater rights within their communities. After the United States Supreme Court ruled in the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision in 1954 that school segregation was unlawful, African Americans and American Indians in North Carolina pushed even harder to break down the system of Jim Crow laws that limited their freedoms. The Ku Klux Klan reacted to this struggle for civil rights by intimidating people of color and their white supporters through cross burnings, marches, and rallies.

During the 1950s, a major leader of the Klan in North Carolina was an evangelist and radio preacher named James "Catfish" Cole. To generate support for continued segregation, Cole traveled the state holding Klan rallies that thousands of white North Carolinians supported. Into Robeson County, home of Sanford Locklear and hundreds of other Lumbee and Tuscarora Indians, Cole brought his message of segregation in 1958.

Locklear recalls that he first heard about the Klan's coming to Robeson County while in a barbershop in Pembroke:

I heared them about burning cross, what, crosses, at Lumberton. And after then, I went [into the] barbershop to get a haircut, and there was men in there talking about it, and said they was coming to Maxton. Says, "Let's meet them in Maxton; let's not give them the chance to come to Pembroke."

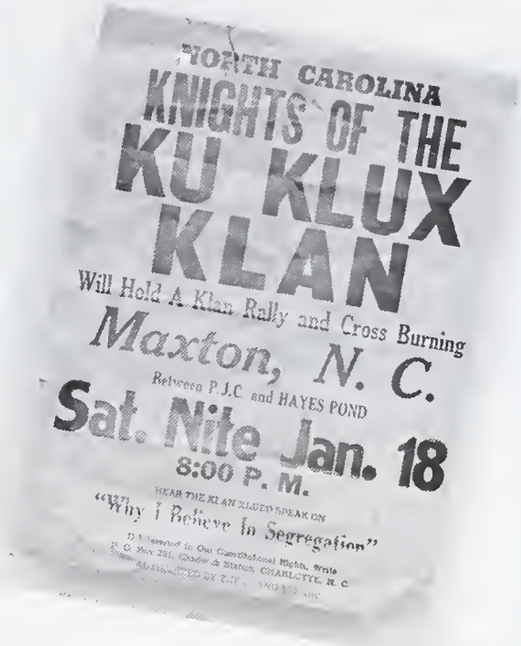
On a crisp, cold Saturday night in January 1958, the Ku Klux Klan began to assemble to hear Cole deliver a speech titled "Why I Believe in

Segregation." Before he could begin speaking, Indians began to stream into the field beside Hayes Millpond outside Maxton. The Indians, ready to break up the rally, brought sticks and weapons to intimidate the Klansmen. Locklear recounts how the Klan was defeated that night:

And we got there. I asked the man, I asked him what was he doing there. He said, "We come to talk to these people." I said. "Well, you're ain't gone talk to these people tonight." He said, "Yes, I am." I said, "No, you ain't." And so words was exchanged, you know. And about that, about that time, I pushed on him and pushed him back, and I throwed the gun on him. I pushed him, you know, and I throwed the gun on him. And I told him not to move. "And don't you move; if you do, well, I'll kill you," that's what I said. And he had his light up there. My brother-in-law shot, he shot his light out, and when he shot the light out, I kicked his tape player, recorder. That's what happened down there.

After Locklear and the other American Indians broke up the Ku Klux Klan rally, many Indians fired their shotguns into the air, and the Klansmen fled. Authorities arrested Cole shortly after the rally and charged him with inciting a riot. He was convicted in court and sentenced to a year in prison.

In spite of being stopped that evening in Robeson County, the Klan continued to hold rallies in North Carolina. Robert Jones pushed to organize the Klan in the 1960s and gained support throughout the state that lasted well into the 1980s. The Klan did not deter the Civil Rights movement, however. Today North Carolina is a different place. People of all races and minority groups are able to vote, receive a quality education, and live their lives free from oppression. Though the struggle took many long years, civil rights today are a reality. That achievement came about perhaps as a result of Indian activist Carnell Locklear's self-proclaimed three keys to success—"faith in what you're doing, and determination, and faith in God."



Handbill for the Saturday, January 18, 1958, rally and cross burning sponsored by the North Carolina Knights of the Ku Klux Klan. *Image courtesy of the Museum of the Native American Resource Center, UNC-Pembroke.*

Scene of a cross burning near St. Pauls, Robeson County, during the 1950s. *Image courtesy of the Museum of the Native American Resource Center, UNC-Pembroke.*

U.S. Senate to withhold ratification. The petition fails.

1836 The U.S. House of Representatives passes the first "gag rule," designed to prevent the introduction, reading, or discussion of any anti-slavery bill or petition.

1838 Approximately 17,000 Cherokee are forcibly removed from North Carolina, Tennessee, Georgia, and Alabama to the Indian Territory, present-day Oklahoma, along the 1,200-mile "Trail of Tears." Some 4,000 to 8,000 Cherokee die during the removal process, about a quarter to half of the total population.

1857 North Carolina native Hinton R. Helper publishes an antislavery book, *The Impending Crisis of the South*, in New York.

The Supreme Court issues the Dred Scott decision, which states that blacks are not considered citizens and that slaveholders can legally take slaves into the western territories. The Court's decision angers antislavery northerners.

1859 Abolitionist John Brown seizes the U.S. Arsenal at Harpers Ferry, Va., in an attempt to incite a slave insurrection. Two free African Americans from North Carolina, Lewis Sheridan Leary of Fayetteville and John Anthony Copeland of Raleigh, join Brown's forces. Leary is killed when federal troops capture the insurgents. Copeland is tried and executed for treason, along with Brown and others.

1860 Abraham Lincoln, who opposes the expansion of slavery in the western territories, wins the presidential election. The Republican ticket, which he heads, does not appear on the ballot in North Carolina and other southern states. After the election, seven southern states leave the Union by the following March.

1861–65 Civil War.

1863 President Lincoln issues the Emancipation Proclamation, freeing slaves in the seceded states.

African American men are allowed to join the U.S. Army and serve in segregated units under white officers.

Love May Lead to Freedom, but It Usually Takes a Few First Steps: The Story of the 1960 Greensboro Sit-Ins

by Dr. Millicent Ellison Brown*

"Move over. I can't see."

"Go down that aisle. Maybe we can get to the front."

"Stop pushing. There's no more room!"

So many people were piled into Bennett College's chapel in 1958 that David Richmond and Ezell Blair, both seventeen years old, were fussing with one another as much as with anyone standing in their way. They had come early enough, they thought, to get to see and hear the famous black minister from Alabama that everyone was talking about. No seats were open, but eventually the young men found room on the floor close to the stage.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., who had worked successfully with dozens of community leaders and thousands of ordinary citizens, was about to speak. He soon explained to the audience his role in challenging the laws and customs that had always given better treatment to whites than to blacks. Dr. King told the packed crowd about the famous thirteen-month-long Montgomery Bus Boycott (1955–1956). By refusing to ride the buses, walking long distances, and banding together, that community had set the foundation for a 1956 United States Supreme Court decision outlawing racial segregation on public buses.

David and Ezell would never forget that night on the Greensboro campus, Dr. King's words, or his passion for standing up for change. They knew that somehow *they* wanted to be a part of the change. But they now understood that passion had to be backed with a strategy, or plan, for organizing. Blacks there in Greensboro, across North Carolina, and throughout the South and the nation continued to be deprived of the simplest rights—sitting, eating, living, working, playing, and learning where they chose and in facilities as good as any provided for whites. Local ministers and leaders that the young men knew, many of them in an organization called the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People), had long encouraged people to work for fairness and just principles. Dr. King's exciting words and dedication represented what countless

(Left to right) David Richmond, Franklin McCain, Ezell Blair, and Joseph McNeil on Sycamore Street outside Woolworth's on February 1, 1960. *Image courtesy of the* Greensboro Daily News.

*Dr. Millicent Ellison Brown works as an assistant professor of history at North Carolina A&T State University in Greensboro. She also served as the guest curator for the upcoming Civil Rights exhibit at the North Carolina Museum of History.

An empty lunch counter that displays a sign Lunch Counter Closed. Time line image of a ca.1890s ballot box used for voting. *Images courtesy of the North Carolina Museum of History.*

people in numerous places were saying and doing: the time had come to make America operate as a true democracy.

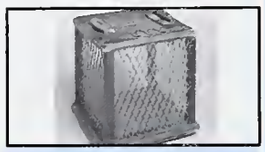
The next year the two teens attended the Agricultural and Technical (A&T) College of North Carolina (now North Carolina A&T State University), located in their hometown. They took the image of someone very much like them—young and black—and shared it with two other freshman students, Joseph McNeil and Franklin McCain. The young men spoke in their dormitory rooms of how others were stepping forward to insist that old ways of treating people of a different color so unfairly would have to end. One night someone threw out an idea. The four agreed they were willing to "make a down payment on manhood." The day the four students, Franklin in his army ROTC uniform, walked the six or seven blocks and sat calmly at the F. W. Woolworth Building lunch counter on South Elm Street was February 1, 1960.

Blacks were allowed to buy goods at all other counters in stores such as Woolworth's, but they couldn't sit down to eat. If they bought food, they would have to walk away with it or stand along the walls. After purchasing toothpaste and school supplies, the four young men went to the lunch counter at the back of the store.

A scene from a sit-in at a lunch counter in Raleigh in 1960. *Image courtesy of the North Carolina Museum of History.*

When told they could not sit down to order food, the students kept their seats and refused to leave the store until it closed. The next day they returned with approximately twenty-five more students. There were eighty-five supporters by the third day, and four hundred by the fourth. These students came from local high schools and colleges, especially A&T and Bennett College, where King had spoken almost two years before. Lunch-counter seats were always left open for any white supporters to take a part, with students from Greensboro's Guilford College and Woman's College among the first white students to join in.

Word spread quickly in newspapers and on television across the state and nation. By the third week of the demonstration, as hundreds of marchers picketed the Greensboro stores and sat at the lunch counters, young people were organizing "sit-ins" in stores and at counters throughout the South. Students, who had no special skills or resources, recognized how important it was to participate in the biggest change the country had seen in many years. A committee appointed by George Roach, Greensboro's mayor from 1957 to 1961, and made up of black and white citizens met regularly trying to end the demonstrations. Adults who



1864 Fugitive slave laws are repealed.

1865 The 13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution outlaws slavery.

1865–77 Reconstruction.

1866 Congress passes a Civil Rights Act, which declares people of color to be United States citizens and nullifies the states' "black codes."

1867 The Congressional Reconstruction Acts grant voting and other rights to men of color and place the Southern states, including North Carolina, in military districts under Federal army occupation.

1868 The 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution grants citizenship to "all persons born or naturalized in the United States."

1870 The 15th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution gives all men the right to vote.

1870–71 Congress passes the Enforcement Acts to control Ku Klux Klan activity and to protect the civil and political rights of people of color.

1875 Congress passes a Civil Rights Act, which provides for social rights, such as equal treatment in public places, and political rights, including access to jury duty, for people of color.

1883 The Supreme Court declares the Civil Rights Act of 1875 invalid for protecting social rights.

1887 The Dawes Act allows the federal government to partition Indian reservations and assign the parts to individual tribal members in an attempt to establish private ownership of Indian lands.

1896 The Supreme Court rules in *Plessy v. Ferguson* that "separate but equal" accommodations are constitutional.

1905 The Niagara Movement, forerunner of the NAACP, is founded in upstate New York and renounces Booker T. Washington's accommodationist policies. W. E. B. Du Bois, one of its leaders, demands immediate racial equality and opposes all laws that discriminate against African Americans.

1909 The NAACP forms in New York.

had been encouraged by the actions of the youth stepped up to demand that city and other government officials take the protests seriously. Even though the president of A&T, Dr. Warmoth T. Gibbs, feared what state officials would do to the college for supporting such "radical" action, he told critics, "We teach students how to think, not what to think."

The protests lasted six months in Greensboro and ended only because of a United States Supreme Court decision made that summer declaring it unconstitutional to segregate lunch counters. On July 25, 1960, Woolworth opened its lunch-counter seats to anyone who had the money to buy, not just white customers. By the end of 1960, "sit-in" demonstrations had evolved into protests against segregation at beaches, libraries, parks, pools, restaurants, and other public places. They had been organized and participated in by young and old in every southern and border state, even Nevada, Illinois, and Ohio.

As a result, fewer people bought tickets, food, or merchandise at places that kept blacks "out." Marchers, picketers, and media attention made it uncomfortable for whites or blacks to come to

Protestors outside Brady's Restaurant in Chapel Hill, ca. 1960s

Female protestors being detained at the Wake County Courthouse ca. 1963 [illegible] North Carolina and Observer Collection, North Carolina State Archives

these spots. As money was lost, people nationwide began to see the impact that economic boycotts could have on helping to bring about social change. Blacks demanded to be hired as clerks, not just to be "allowed" to act as customers. Always, there was a commitment on the part of protestors to be peaceful and nonviolent when pressing for justice, even when crowds were rowdy and violent toward them.

Slowly, some stores and businesses in the South began to change policies, but the majority still treated blacks in an inferior and unjust way. The Civil Rights Act of 1964, passed under President

The sign above indicates one of the reasons that African Americans were seeking equal treatment under the law.

Lyndon B. Johnson, finally made it unconstitutional for black citizens to be denied public access anywhere in the nation. The 1965 Voting Rights Act guaranteed that same right at the voting booths.

The beginning of the most successful student-organized and student-led movement in American history is remembered with a statue at the four Greensboro students' alma mater. The university annually awards its Human Rights Medal to others still working to keep love for humanity as the foundation for freedom—when some of us are willing to take those first steps.

"The Great Agitator": Golden A. Frinks

by Shirl Spicer

Soul Power! . . . Soul Power!
Black Power! . . . Black Power!
People Power! . . . People Power!
Right on! . . . Right on!

With fists raised, members of the audience paid homage to "The Great Agitator" on July 24, 2004, as North Carolina laid to rest one of its greatest unsung heroes of the Civil Rights movement—Golden Asro Frinks. For most of his eighty-four years, Golden Frinks led generations of young and old, African American and American Indian to take a stand and demand their "equal part to enjoy the fruits of America."

Golden Frinks *(second from left, wearing medallion)* leads a Hyde County school boycott march in February 1969. Andrew Young is beside him. *Courtesy of the News and Observer Collection, North Carolina State Archives.* Time line image shows African American soldiers training at Camp Lejeune, ca. 1942. *Image courtesy of the Library of Congress.*

Who was this "Great Agitator" and "Mr. Civil Rights," as those closest to him affectionately called him? Born in Horry County, South Carolina, on April 26, 1920, Golden Frinks grew up in Tabor City after his family moved to North Carolina. When he was seventeen, he moved to Edenton. Frinks was a United States Army veteran who served during World War II as a staff sergeant at Fort McCullough, Alabama. Following active duty, he returned to Edenton, eventually married Ruth Holley, and began the fight to obtain equal rights for the local population of African Americans.

Frinks's career as a civil rights activist and organizer began in 1956 with a movement, which involved hundreds of people in Edenton, to desegregate public facilities such as the movie theater, stores, and restaurants in town. Over the next six years, Frinks spearheaded the struggle in Edenton to defeat the unjust practices of Jim Crow by using the tactics and strategies that would become his trademark. Through nonviolent acts of civil disobedience, such as sit-ins, protests, demonstrations, and marches (led mainly by young people), Frinks led dozens of communities throughout North Carolina toward

1910–30 In the most active years of the Great Migration, huge numbers of African Americans move away from the South to escape Jim Crow and search for higher wages in the Northeast and Midwest. An estimated total of 3.5 million leave between 1890 and 1930.

1914–18 World War I.

1915 The Supreme Court outlaws the "grandfather clause."

1917 The nation enters WWI. Many Indians and African Americans serve in Europe, the former in white units and the latter in segregated units.

1920 The 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution grants voting rights to women.

1922 The Dyer Anti-lynching Bill passes in the U.S. House of Representatives but fails in the Senate.

1924 Federal law declares all Indians to be citizens.

1929 A stock market crash begins the Great Depression.

1938 After a black student is denied admission to the University of Missouri law school on the basis of race, the Supreme Court rules in *Missouri ex rel. Gaines v. Canada* that the state must provide equal educational facilities for him.

1939–45 World War II.

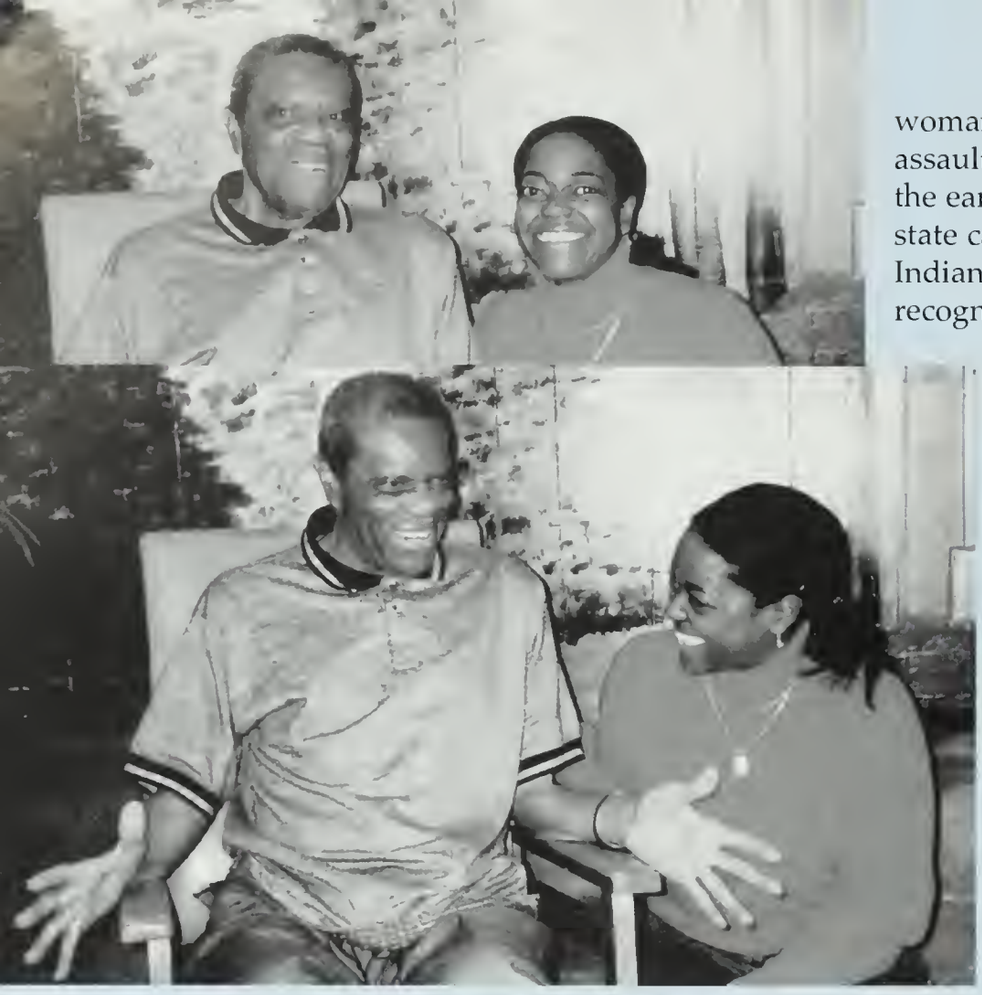
1941 The nation enters WWII following the attack on Pearl Harbor. Many African Americans serve in the military in segregated units. All black marines train at Montford Point, the segregated section of Camp Lejeune.

A. Philip Randolph calls for a march on Washington to protest the unfair treatment of blacks in war industries. Pres. Franklin D. Roosevelt responds with an executive order that forbids employment discrimination in the defense and government contract industries.

1942 CORE, a civil rights group dedicated to direct action through nonviolence, is founded in Chicago.

1943 CORE stages the first successful sit-in demonstration in Chicago.

1948 Pres. Harry Truman approves



Golden Frinks during a February 2004 interview with curator Shirl Spicer. *Images courtesy of Shirl Spicer.*

freedom from the injustices of segregation and racial discrimination. In 1963 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. personally selected Frinks to become a field secretary for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) in North Carolina, a position he held until 1977.

Golden Frinks's unique style of activism wore down racist political practices, earning him the nickname "The Great Agitator." He led more than a dozen movements for civil rights for African Americans and American Indians throughout North Carolina, three of which rivaled well-known movements such as those in Birmingham and Montgomery, Alabama. The Hyde County School Boycott led to the desegregation of public schools and the preservation of historically black school buildings in that county. The Edenton, Williamston, Plymouth, and Greenville movements contributed to the desegregation of public facilities and the integration of public schools.

Frinks's activities were not limited to North Carolina. He worked with SCLC throughout the Southeast to fight for racial equality. He also spearheaded individual cases of alleged racial injustice, such as that of Joann Little, an African American woman accused of killing her jailer after he had assaulted her in a North Carolina prison during the early 1970s. In 1973 Frinks marched to the state capital of Raleigh along with the Tuscarora Indians to support their struggle to gain tribal recognition and representation on the Robeson County school board.

During a recent interview, Frinks shared what he thought was one of the most memorable things about those movements in Williamston, Edenton, and other counties in North Carolina.

The change. Attitudinal change is one thing. Because once you have a couple of days with a community, community begins to understand. One thing about it, in all of my movements, I tried to keep the press with me. I never tried to push the press away. So that the news would get out, whether good or bad. And I would deal with it. That . . . change . . . the community would change, gradually, and get closer and closer. And I remember in Fuquay-Varina, a group stood back until the next morning . . . [because] they didn't understand. . . . The next morning they marched out of the town with us, you see.

First they didn't understand. But they stood back and watched, you know, and see what we were saying. . . . And the black church would open up. We would always find that one church [that] would open up. And then some of them would come to the church and then understand what we were doing, and then they would join in with us.

Jailed eighty-seven times for his civil rights activities in North Carolina and throughout the Southeast, Golden Frinks remained a passionate advocate for racial justice during the course of his life. Frinks delivered a poignant speech in the late 1970s that included the passage below. (The entire speech has been recorded in a commemorative booklet titled *The Great Agitator: "We Shall Overcome Someday."*) In the passage, Frinks recalls the many turbulent and tragic incidents from the Civil Rights movement.

I am here this midday with you—and should I say getting here was easy would be a [misnomer]—for I came the hard way. We as black people must never forget . . . On my way here I got gunned down in Georgia, I was

bombed in Sunday school in Alabama, we were shot in the back in Mississippi, I came across the [Edmnnd Pettus] Bridge beaten and bleeding . . .

. . . I came by the funeral of Martin Lnther King Jr., the body of Malcolm X, and the slain, limp body of John Kennedy. I came by tent cities, for poor people who only wanted to vote. . . . But more important I AM STILL COMING . . .

. . . I came by signs reading I AM A MAN. . . . But there lay bleeding in his front yard a Harry Lee Dickens . . . shot by a white minister's wife—I am a man and I AM STILL COMING . . .

. . . I came by a riot in Washington, D.C., men have died for. We must be determined to live for, in the instance npon respect for these rights, not just for the weak, or the strong, but for the unpopular as well as the popular—the minority as well as the majority. . . . Asking that no special treatment I ask, we want as equal part to enjoy the fruits of America . . .

You America can no longer put down with authority . . . or jail those who have pnt their life on the line for freedom . . . I AM STILL COMING. . . .

Among the hundreds who gathered on that rainy afternoon in late July 2004 to celebrate the life of this hero were

Golden Frinks *(at right)* participates in the 1973 Tuscarora Indian march to Raleigh. *Image courtesy of the News and Observer Collection, North Carolina State Archives. Time line image of segregated classroom courtesy of the North Carolina Museum of History.*

and blacks laying dead in Watts, in California—because America passed them by because of their color—I AM STILL COMING . . .

I came by the fields of battles where onr forefathers fought wars to make fast these truths that all men are created equal—I came holding high the hopes and dreams of America—ever ready to defend what some

Frinks's lifelong companion and wife, Mrs. Ruth Frinks; their daughter, Dr. Goldie Ann F. Wells; and a host of family and friends. One lasting reminder from Golden Frinks resonated throughout the reflections shared by numerous people who had labored tirelessly at his side: "Our struggle for civil rights is not over."

desegregation of the military and creates the Fair Employment Board.

1950–53 In the Korean War, minorities serve in integrated units.

1954 The Supreme Court overturns the *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision by ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* that segregated public schools are unconstitutional.

1955 The Montgomery Bus Boycott begins in Alabama after NAACP member Rosa Parks refuses to give up her seat in the front section of a bus for a white passenger. The boycott lasts until the buses are desegregated the next year.

The Interstate Commerce Commission orders integration of buses and trains and their waiting rooms for interstate travel.

1956 The "Southern Manifesto," signed by 101 congressmen from the South, protests school desegregation.

Congress passes the "Lumbee Bill," which recognizes the Lumbee as an Indian tribe but denies them services from the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

The Supreme Court outlaws the segregation of tax-supported colleges and universities.

1957 Congress passes a Civil Rights Act aimed at ensuring that all people can exercise their right to vote. It establishes a bipartisan Commission on Civil Rights to investigate and intervene in cases of denial of voting rights and equal protection under the law because of race. This is the first civil rights legislation in 82 years and the first in the 20th century.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Charles K. Steele, and Fred L. Shuttlesworth establish the SCLC to coordinate local efforts in the South to work for civil rights.

Pres. Dwight D. Eisenhower sends federal troops to enforce desegregation at the formerly all-white Central High School in Little Rock, Ark. They escort the nine African American students who first integrate the school.

1960 Congress passes a Civil Rights Act that establishes penalties for

What We Can't Do Alone, We Can Do Together

*by Mac Legerton**

We often forget how much we need and rely on other people. None of us learned to feed ourselves, walk, or tie our shoes on our own when we were children. We hear so many messages that tell us we can and should make it on our own, and we start to believe it. Such a statement just isn't true. We need each other. We rely on each other and are incomplete without each other.

Many of us understood the truth of this message when we came together in the 1980s to improve our county of Robeson. This county is a very special place. Robeson is the most "ethnically diverse" rural county in the entire United States, according to the book *Rural Communities: Legacy and Change*. This characteristic was true in the 1980s, and the county is even more diverse today. In the 1990s, Robeson experienced a large influx of Latino workers, who were recruited and hired to work in the meatpacking industry. Consequently, you are more likely to meet people of other ethnic or racial groups in Robeson County than anywhere else in rural America.

Thirty people of various races and from all walks of life gathered together in Robeson County in 1980 to form the organization Center for Community Action. We held community meetings throughout the county and met with other members of the three major races: European American (white), Native American (Indian), and African American (black). We asked people numerous questions such as:

- What are the major causes of poverty in the county?
- How are people discriminated against because of their race, their sex, or their level of income?

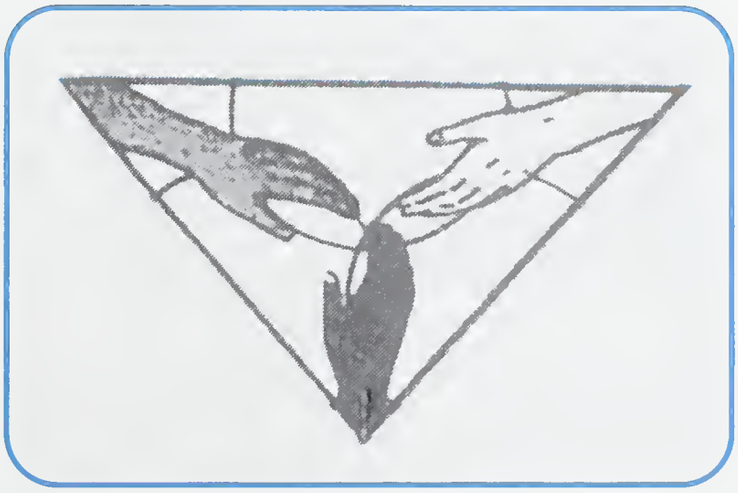
Three thousand participants marched and rallied in Pembroke in 1986 to protest GSX, a proposed seven-state regional toxic waste facility. The march was part of an eight-year campaign to halt the siting of the toxic waste facility in the area. *Image courtesy of Mac Legerton.*

*Mac Legerton is the founder and executive director of the Center for Community Action in Lumberton. He is an ordained minister in the Southern Conference of the United Church of Christ. Legerton is a writer, motivational speaker, and workshop leader in youth, adult, and community development programs.

•What policies and laws need to be changed or adopted to improve political, social, and economic opportunities and treatment of all people?

We collected the information from these discussions and compared our findings to United States Census Bureau information and other published data on our county and state. We made a list of all of the people and organizations in the county that could help change and improve Robeson. As we progressed over the years, more people surfaced and came forward as leaders and contributors, some of whom we had not known before.

Besides making a commitment to organize and unite people of many races and walks of life, we realized that we had to work on more than one issue at the same time. All of the problems and solutions that we identified and selected related to increasing equality and social justice in our county. We knew that it would take about twenty years to accomplish everything we hoped for, but we were committed for the duration. We wanted to correct the historical imbalance in our local society by combining the strategies of community organizing, grassroots empowerment, research, coalition building, and policy change.



A portion of the symbol of the Robeson County Church and Coummunity Center, representing the three major races reaching out to work together. *Image courtesy of Mac Legerton.* Time line image of the July 3, 1964, *Charlotte Observer* headline reading "LBJ Signs Sweeping Rights Bill into Law." *Courtesy of the North Carolina Museum of History.*

The major social-change needs and goals that we identified over the first three years of work fell into the following categories:

•Equitable and more professional racial representation in county and municipal government

•More professional elected officials and administrators

•Court and law enforcement reform—leading to a more balanced and fair system with more diverse leadership

•Education improvement and school reform

•Public assistance reform—with better and broader delivery of services to the poor, sick, and underprivileged

•Employment reform—better wages, benefits, and conditions

•Economic development—more locally owned, small businesses

•Agricultural reform—alternative crop production with less use of pesticides and herbicides

•Environmental protection of the land, water, and wildlife

•Cultural and multicultural curricula for our schools

•Youth and adult leadership development

We understood from the beginning that the effort would take the hard work and cooperation of many groups, organizational leaders, and thousands of ordinary citizens to be successful. Different coalitions and collaborations were developed to address different issues. If the approach and work that I am describing seem overwhelming, they often were. For many years, and up to the present, our social-change work has been an around-the-clock job. Change rarely comes easily for us as individuals, families, communities, institutions, systems, or cultures.

In the 1980s, we faced great conflict and turmoil during this process of change in Robeson County. When controversial events unfolded and conflicts intensified, crises erupted that often spiraled out of control. Anger, fear, and insecurity can cause humans to harm one another. The

LBJ Signs Swee
Rights Bill Int
Goldwater
Afraid He'll
Fan Racism

obstructing anyone's attempt to register to vote or to vote.

1961 CORE sponsors Freedom Rides across the South to enforce the 1955 Interstate Commerce Commission order for integration of interstate public transportation.

1963 The March on Washington to support civil rights legislation draws some 250,000 people. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. delivers his famous "I Have a Dream" speech.

Four young African American girls are killed in the bombing of the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Ala., the site of civil rights mass meetings. Riots follow in the city.

After police arrest Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and other ministers demonstrating in Birmingham, Ala., and turn fire hoses and police dogs on the protesters, King pens his "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" urging clergy across the country to support the Civil Rights movement.

1964 The 24th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution outlaws the poll tax.

Congress passes a Civil Rights Act that outlaws discrimination in employment, public facilities, and education.

Congress passes the Economic Opportunity Act, the centerpiece of Pres. Lyndon B. Johnson's "War on Poverty." The act provides for job training, adult education, and loans to small businesses, and its programs include VISTA, the Job Corps, Head Start, Adult Basic Education, and Economic Development.

COFO, a network of civil rights groups that includes CORE and SNCC, launches a massive effort to register black voters during the "Freedom Summer."

1965 Police attack crowds of men, women, and children as they cross Pettus Bridge in Selma, Ala., on a march toward Montgomery. "Bloody Sunday" inspires a series of protest marches throughout the Southeast. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. leads a

lives of several leaders of the social-change movement were threatened, including my own. There were six major public leaders of the reform: two Indian, two African American, and two white men. They were attorney Julian Pierce, John Godwin, state representative Dr. Joy Johnson, Rev. Sidney Locks, Rev. Bob Mangum, and myself. Julian Pierce, director of Lumbee River Legal Services, was murdered while running for public office. The serious political struggles that we experienced in the 1980s were similar to the perils and traumas of war. Both the anticipation of desperately needed change and the resistance to that change can cause people to act in harmful ways. These are the burdens of the human struggle for freedom.

Because of the civil rights struggles of the 1980s and the blessings of new opportunity and freedom, Robeson County is now a better place. Some successes that we have achieved follow.

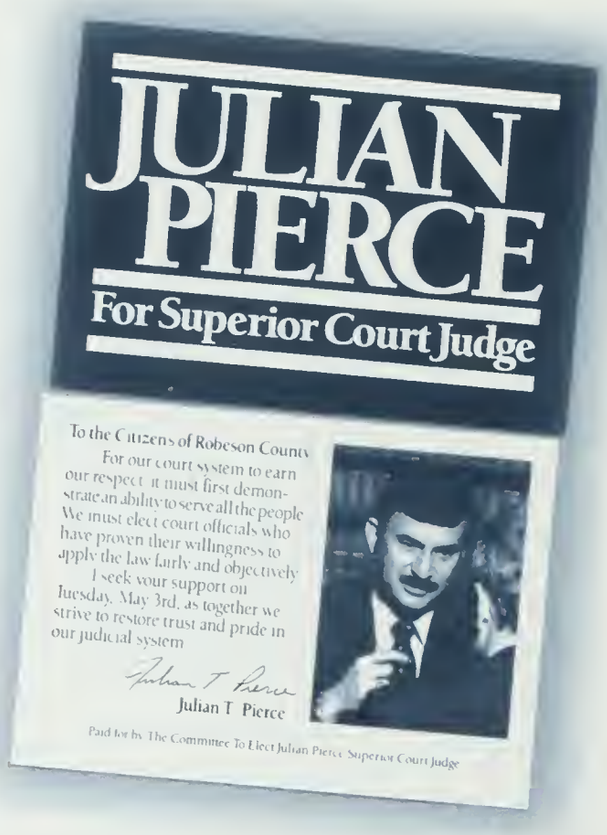
We now have the three major races represented on the county commission board, the school board, and the delegation to the North Carolina House of Representatives. We accomplished these results through redistricting (reshaping election districts), by creating different districts where each race had greater opportunities to elect its own representatives. Robeson County may have the most ethnically diverse rural government in the United States today because of our accomplishments, which we have realized together. The challenge now is to make our political system even more inclusive, creating opportunities for our new Latino neighbors to have a place at the decision-making table.

In Robeson County, we now have a public defender system, one of the few such systems in rural North Carolina. Our urban counties have public defender offices that represent low-income defendants, but nearly all of the rural counties do not. We have a more balanced court system that has both a district attorney office and a public defender office working as advocates for their clients. We have lawyers and judges of the three major races who respect one another and their clients.

We now have one countywide school system—the Public Schools of Robeson County. Before 1975, we had six separate school systems, and we were down to five systems by 1988, when the North Carolina legislature allowed our citizens to decide by vote whether to merge the schools into one system that had fair and equitable funding for all our children. Faced with the serious need to improve education, administrators and leaders are learning how to improve schools and our students' educational performance.

We now have Lumber River State Park, Luther Britt Park, River Way Outdoor Adventure and Education Center, and other ecological treasures for public enjoyment. Back in the 1980s, our county was selected as the site for two multistate toxic and low-level radioactive waste facilities. Both the citizens and local governments successfully fended off these proposals after spending millions of dollars and organizing thousands of people to stand in opposition for eight years. Our parks and environmental programs provide new incentives and strategies for protecting and promoting our land, water, and air resources so that we will never again face similar toxic threats.

With its cultural and ecological diversity, Robeson County is a microcosm of our state and nation. If we can join together here and be successful at improving our community, we can inspire others who face similar challenges. We can also keep learning and keep challenging ourselves to do more.



The front and back of a handbill used during the Julian Pierce judicial campaign. An NAACP lawsuit had resulted in the special judgeship for which Pierce was campaigning. Even though he had been killed, Julian Pierce did win the election posthumously. His opponent ended up serving in the office. *Image courtesy of Mac Legerton.*

•We are learning to evaluate who in our communities is not afforded equal opportunity and treatment.
•We are learning to open our eyes and see how all people's interests are not being equally protected and equally promoted.
•We are learning how to reach beyond the boundaries of the familiar and work with others for the common good of all.
•We are learning how to be wise advocates, not blinded by our own passions—even for good—in ways that **build** bridges between people and institutions, instead of burning them.

In the end, freedom is not so much what we are free from as what we are free for. Yes, freedom is about having rights. But more important, freedom is about being responsible for how we use, expand, and share these rights.

It is my hope that as a part of their citizenship, more and more young people in North Carolina will participate in efforts to improve the quality and the equality of life in their communities. In the end, the energy and commitment of young people represent a unique opportunity to create a larger, more cooperative effort to improve our state, our nation, and the status of our human family and our planet.

Citizens at a public hearing in 1985 to halt the siting of a low-level radioactive waste incinerator in St. Pauls. *Image courtesy of Mac Legerton.*

Time line image of signs used at a ca. 1966 voter registration march courtesy of the News and Observer Collection, North Carolina State Archives.

successful march from Selma to Montgomery a few weeks later.

1965 Congress passes a Voting Rights Act prohibiting interference in anyone's right to vote.

Malcolm X, a former minister with the Nation of Islam, a black nationalist, and founder of the Organization of Afro-American Unity, is assassinated in Harlem, N.Y.

1965–75 In the Vietnam War, minorities serve in integrated units.

1965–68 Urban racial riots take place in Los Angeles, Newark, Detroit, and Chicago.

1966 The Black Panther Party is founded in Oakland, Calif.

CORE and SNCC adopt the "black power" concept.

1967 The Supreme Court overturns a Virginia law prohibiting interracial marriage.

1968 Congress passes a Civil Rights Act prohibiting racial discrimination in the sale or rental of housing.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. is assassinated in Memphis, Tenn.

1969 The Supreme Court rules that school districts must end racial segregation at once.

1972 Congress passes the Equal Rights Amendment, and it goes to the states for ratification. Because it is not ratified by the required number of states, it does not become constitutional law.

Shirley Chisholm becomes the first African American woman to run for president.

1978 The Supreme Court rules in *Bakke v. Regents of the University of California* that racial quotas to achieve student body diversity are unconstitutional, but that race can be a factor in university admissions decisions.

1979 The American Indian Religious Freedom Act guarantees religious freedom to members of Indian tribes, including the right to hold traditional ceremonies.

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Civil Rights exhibit coming soon to museum!

Image from the News and Observer Collection, North Carolina State Archives, 1964.

http://ncmuseumofhistory.org